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THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 4 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Ayush Shetty stuns world No. 7 Lin Shi Feng of China in straight games (21-13 21-16) to enter 2nd round of men's singles competition at Badminton Asia Championships, **P 15**

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33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, ensuring participation in nation-building

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Atleast 1 Woman Director in 48% of the total recognized startups in India

■ US, Iran Agree To 2-Week Ceasefire; Lebanon Excluded? ■ Trump Says Tehran's 10-Pt Plan 'Workable' ■ Gulf Nations Report New Attacks

Fragile Truce After Furious Ultimatum

Iran Shuts Hormuz Over Fresh Israeli Strikes On Lebanon

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: In a sudden pivot that pulled the world back from the precipice of Armageddon, the United States and Iran have entered a fragile two-week ceasefire after days of escalating strikes and threats, offering a narrow diplomatic window for West Asia peace amid residual mistrust and scepticism.

The truce, announced by US President Donald Trump just two hours before his 8pm deadline, turned his threat to "erase Iranian civilisation", into what he termed as "a big day for world peace". It marked a welcome – if chaotic – deescalation in a five-week-long conflict that has seen global oil prices soar and the world economy get edgy.

Questions remain though about whether the ceasefire — stitched together through public signalling and backchannel contacts, with Pakistan playing a big role — is a genuine turning point or merely an interlude in a volatile confrontation. Both sides claimed victory: Trump's 'war secretary' Pete Hegseth said Iran "begged" for ceasefire and the US President chose "mercy", while Tehran congratulated Iranian people on "forcing the criminal America to accept its 10-point plan", describing the truce as conditional and reversible.

The contours of the ceasefire, as understood from official statements and diplomatic sources, are limited but significant. Predicated on a 10-point Iran proposal — which Trump initially rejected as inadequate but now says forms a "workable basis" for talks in Islamabad later this week — it will see both sides halt direct military strikes and restrain allied or proxy forces for 14 days.

Astonishingly, a peace deal could see both sides commercialise traffic passing through the Strait of Hormuz and profit from the dispute at the expense of the rest of the world.

However, at present, the strait remains closed. Iran said it had shut the passage in response to Israeli attacks on Lebanon. Israel launched its biggest attacks yet on Lebanon targeting Hezbollah, in which over 250 people were killed, as per Lebanese civil defence. Iran also struck oil facilities in Gulf, a huge pipeline in Saudi Arabia used to bypass the blockaded strait. Kuwait, Bahrain and the UAE also reported strikes.

FULL COVERAGE: PG OPP, INSIDE JACKET, P 12 & 13

▶ SEE INSIDE JACKET

VP VANCE TO HEAD FOR ISLAMABAD TALKS SATURDAY

Photo: AFP

Iran's Supreme National Security Council said **'US has, in principle, committed to' its 10-pt plan, including:**

- Non-aggression
- Continued Iranian control over Strait of Hormuz
- Acceptance of uranium enrichment
- Lifting all primary and secondary sanctions
- Termination of resolutions passed by UNSC and IAEA
- Withdrawal of US combat forces from region
- Cessation of war on all fronts, including Lebanon

A US official later said the plan published by Iran in Persian was not the same Trump agreed to, but they wouldn't 'negotiate in public'

RIVALS DIFFER ON 'DEAL'

- Iran and Pakistan said **fighting would pause in Lebanon.** Amid fresh Israeli strikes, Netanyahu and Trump said fight against Hezbollah not part of deal
- Trump said US will work with Iran to remove buried enriched uranium; Iran didn't confirm this
- Iran said deal allowed it to formalise **tolling in Hormuz.** Trump spoke of a 'joint venture'

US team, led by VP Vance, to reach Pak for talks Saturday. Iranian foreign minister Araghchi & speaker Qalibaf set to attend

A series of Israeli strikes, the most intense since war began, hit Lebanese capital Beirut Wednesday, testing the ceasefire plan

"A big day for World Peace! Iran wants it to happen, they've had enough... US will be helping with traffic buildup in Strait of Hormuz... Big money will be made. Iran can start reconstruction... this could be the Golden Age of Middle East! —Donald Trump

India hails ceasefire, hopes for peace in Ukraine too

New Delhi: The Pakistan-brokered temporary ceasefire — after six weeks of a brutal war in the West Asia region — was welcomed by India in an official statement in which govt also expressed hope that the truce will lead to a lasting peace in the region, **reports Sachin Parashar.**

Stressing that the conflict had already caused immense suffering to people and disrupted global energy supply and trade networks, India said it expected unimpeded freedom of navigation and global flow of commerce to prevail via the Strait of Hormuz. It hopes that the development will also encourage peace efforts in Ukraine.

▶ Welcome all steps, P 16

'Expeditiously exit': India to nat'ls in Iran

India on Wednesday advised its nationals in Iran to "expeditiously exit" the country. The embassy in Tehran also said there should be "no attempt to approach any international land border without prior consultation with embassy". PTI

Pakistan takes centre stage as truce mediator

Pakistan has taken centre stage as a mediator, with backchannel parleys by Islamabad leading to the US-Iran ceasefire. PM Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir reportedly engaged US Vice President JD Vance and Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi for the truce. Talks will be held in Islamabad Saturday. Araghchi and Iranian speaker Mohammad Qalibaf are set to attend. INSIDE JACKET

Fertiliser subsidy up 12%; LPG relief for industries

Govt on Wednesday approved a 12% hike in subsidy for phosphatic and potassic (non-urea) fertilisers for Kharif season, to Rs 41,534 crore, to insulate farmers from rising global prices due to the West Asia war. Govt also said pharma, food, polymers, paints, and glass, among other industries, will get 70% of their pre-March bulk LPG demand, subject to an overall sectoral cap of 200 tonne per day. FLAP OPP

Airline landing, parking charges slashed by 25%

Govt on Wednesday announced a 25% cut in landing and parking charges for domestic airlines at all 34 airports in the country for three months in a bid to provide reprieve to airlines, reeling under higher fuel prices and longer routes due to the US-Iran war. Operators of airports in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and others have been directed to do so with immediate effect. FLAP OPP

Sensex cheers war pause, posts 2nd highest 1-day gain

News of the truce lifted markets, with the sensex gaining 2,946 points or 4% to close at 77,563 points, nearly a one-month high level on Wednesday. The day's nearly 3,000-point rise for the index was its second biggest single-day gain in history. Markets in Japan, Hong Kong, China, the UK, Germany, and the US closed higher too.

The rupee strengthened, closing at 92.58 against the dollar, up 48 paise from its previous close. Crude oil prices retreated toward $90 a barrel. P 13

RBI keeps repo rate unchanged, predicts 6.9% GDP growth

The Monetary Policy Committee of RBI on Wednesday decided to keep the policy rate (repo rate) unchanged at 5.25% for the second consecutive meeting, with governor Sanjay Malhotra being cautiously optimistic about keeping rates lower for longer. RBI forecast GDP growth at 6.9% for the year, and retail inflation at 4.6%. P 13

Injured protester dies, stir against Manipur CM

While a third protester injured in CRPF firing in Manipur died Wednesday, protests escalated in Imphal East demanding the resignation of CM Yumnam Khemchand Singh and home minister Konthoujam Govindas. Cops used tear gas to disperse the crowd, which had assembled amid a curfew. P 8

India decides not to host COP33 summit

India has withdrawn its offer to host COP33 in 2028. The decision follows a review of its commitments for the year 2028. With India out, South Korea is likely to become the host as it had earlier expressed interest. P 8

2 Delhi engrs die as car hits barrier in UP

Two BTech grads from Delhi were killed on Delhi-Dehradun Greenfield Expressway in Baghpat around 1am on Wednesday as their car rammed a cemented barrier on an unopened stretch of the road. TNN

II PU results to be out at 3pm today

Results of II PU-1 exams conducted in Feb-March this year would be announced at 3pm Thursday. In a first, marks cards of students will be made available through DigiLocker by afternoon. P 3

Bangalore Times

All Quiet on the Middle Eastern Front*

*for now

APRIL 8 | STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Thriller • Suspenseful • Political • Hard-hitting • Dramatic • Based on Real Life • Action • Mystery

Buzzstop

ARIJIT JAIN RESCHEDULES DUBAI SHOW AMID 'CURRENT GLOBAL ISSUES'

'KETAMINE QUEEN' TO BE SENTENCED IN PERRY'S CASE

'Today, cinema is marked by fear, propaganda and a loss of truth'

ANURAG KASHYAP

Controversy takes centerstage as Ye West returns to stage

MINISTRY OFFERS SUPPORT | MANY MIGRANTS UNAWARE OF 5-KG CYLINDERS

Gas relief: Industries to get 70% of requirement

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EASING THE BURDEN: Priority will be given to industrial units that require LPG for specialised purposes which cannot be substituted by natural gas, stated the Union ministry of petroleum and natural gas

Bengaluru: In a bid to ease fuel supply for industry, the Union ministry of petroleum and natural gas announced Wednesday that industrial units will now receive 70% of their LPG requirements. The directive spans a wide array of sectors — from pharmaceuticals and food processing to polymers, agriculture and packaging.

It also extends to industries such as paint, uranium, heavy water, steel, seeds, metals, ceramics, foundries, forging, glass and aerosol manufacturing. The step is seen as an effort to ensure smoother operations for businesses that rely heavily on LPG, helping them maintain production without disruption.

BURNER WOES

According to the ministry's circular, the units can now obtain 70% of their pre-March 2026 bulk non-domestic LPG consumption level, subject to an overall sectoral limit of 0.2 TMT per day. The ministry has stated that priority would be given to industrial units that require LPG for specialised purposes which cannot be substituted by natural gas.

Supply of 5kg doubled

On Monday, the ministry announced a plan to double the supply of 5-kg LPG cylinders, aiming to ensure access for migrant labourers across the country. These cylinders, classified as Free Trade LPG (FTL), can be purchased from LPG distribution agencies, as well as selected petrol pumps and retailers, on producing any govt-issued identity card. However, distributors say they are still waiting for clear guidelines on preventing misuse or indiscriminate buying of the smaller cylinders.

Under the scheme, an Indane FTL cylinder costs Rs 1,505, with subsequent refills priced at Rs 630 each. For HP FTL cylinders, the cost is Rs 1,519, with refills at Rs 631.

"Though FTL was available previously, it was not well publicised. Migrant workers were unaware of how to get a cylinder. They hesitated as a connection would require an Aadhaar card and other documents, which they might not have. Making FTLs known to them also curbs illegal refills which are sold at higher prices," LG Kumar, secretary of the Karnataka circle of All India LPG Distributors Federation, said, adding that each distributor is getting around 50 FTLs per day from companies.

"Most migrant workers are unaware of FTLs. Our delivery personnel are spreading awareness of this at railway stations, bus stands, labourers' settlements and other areas," he added. During a video conference with DGMs of oil firms and secretaries of the ministry Wednesday, distributors were asked to issue cylinders when the customer produces any govt ID card. However, distributors are unsure how they can authenticate whether the customers are migrant workers or are in genuine need of the cylinder.

Private LPG stations increase price to ₹120/litre, autos line up at govt pumps

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Bengaluru: Two weeks on, long queues of green LPG autorickshaws continue to be a common sight at fuel stations across the city. Very few private outlets remain operational, and many auto drivers are avoiding them due to higher prices.

At a gas-filling station in Banashankari, operated by Indian Oil and Petronas, footfall has been minimal. According to locals, the station remained shut for several days. A similar situation persists across many private gas stations in the city, which continue to struggle with low demand and intermittent closures.

"Since this crisis began, I've only been refuelling at govt-run pumps. Most private stations are closed, and even when they are open, they charge around Rs 120 per litre of LPG," said Velu, an autorickshaw driver from Majestic. A private LPG filling station on Bannerghatta Road near Jayadeva Hospital Metro station remained open but saw little interest from autorickshaws. According to drivers, the price here, capped at Rs 120 per litre, is nearly double what they paid before the crisis. Almost 6km away in Koramangala, an Indian Oil Corporation station presents a stark contrast. Long queues of autos stretch hundreds of metres into nearby residential layouts.

At this station, drivers were observed arguing over queue priority. "More people queue up here because the price is around Rs 90 per litre, much lower than at private stations. Earnings have also dropped, as only a few trips are available," said Syed Moula, a driver from Koramangala. Moula added that to cope with the situation, drivers like him, who rely solely on offline trips, are being forced to charge commuters an extra Rs 15-30 per ride.

Dept: Don't fall for scarcity rumours

According to state govt, however, stability in auto LPG supply was restored between April 2 and 6. Public sector companies supplied 87.8 metric tonnes on April 2, 86.1 metric tonnes on April 3, 84.8 metric tonnes on April 4, peaking at 94.1 metric tonnes on April 5, and 83.6 metric tonnes on April 6.

On Wednesday, the department of food, civil supplies and consumer affairs urged auto owners and drivers not to fall for rumours of scarcity and queue up unnecessarily at gas stations.

"Only a minor shortage was observed at some private auto gas suppliers. To address this, govt-owned oil companies—IOC (Indian Oil), BPC (Bharat Petroleum), and HPC (Hindustan Petroleum)—are supplying additional gas," the department said. Earlier, these three companies supplied an average of 56.7 metric tonnes of auto LPG daily. To meet current demand, the supply has now been increased significantly, with retail outlets receiving an average of 83.6 metric tonnes per day.

Teenager steals gold from grandfather's home, in custody

Times News Network

Bengaluru: A minor was apprehended by Banaswadi police for allegedly stealing around 200 grams of gold ornaments from his grandfather's house last year.

Police have recovered 35 grams of gold, valued at approximately Rs 5 lakh. The 82-year-old resident of Banaswadi, who lives with his wife, filed a complaint on Dec 12, stating that about 199 grams of gold kept in a cupboard had been stolen on Aug 13, 2025. He suspected his grandson and a friend who had visited the house that day.

The juvenile, who resides with his maternal grandmother in Chikkamagaluru district, had visited the complainant's house with his friend. The elderly couple had stepped out to see a doctor at 5.30pm and returned at 6pm to find both boys gone.

They discovered that gold ornaments — purchased over 32 years ago, including a mangalya chain, bangles, three gold chains, a pair of earrings, and rings — were missing. The complaint had been delayed due to the complainant's health issues.

During investigation, police gathered credible evidence linking the grandson to the theft. Officials noted that he was already a juvenile in conflict with the law, having been involved in a previous case under Lingadahalli police limits, and was under the jurisdiction of Juvenile Justice Board in Chikkamagaluru.

Police obtained a body warrant and produced the boy before the board in Bengaluru on April 2, taking him into custody for three days.

During questioning, the juvenile confessed to selling the stolen gold at a jewellery shop in Mysuru. Police were able to recover only 35 grams of the ornaments. The school dropout reportedly spent the proceeds on partying and personal expenses. He was later handed over to the board in Chikkamagaluru. An officer said the complainant is now willing to settle the matter, given that the offence was committed by his own grandson.

—Nyasa Gupta

B'ghatta Rd now set for makeover

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Bannerghatta Main Road has finally caught the authorities' attention, with Bengaluru South City Corporation and Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Limited (B-Smile) conducting an inspection Wednesday.

TOI recently highlighted the plight of commuters on the arterial stretch which was filled with dust, apart from posing safety hazards.

BSCC commissioner KN Ramesh and B-Smile technical director BS Prahlad inspected the road where Namma Metro's Pink Line is scheduled for inauguration. Officials said a detailed project report (DPR) is being prepared for developing the stretch from Hosur Road to Koli Farm Junction.

Ramesh directed immediate resurfacing of damaged stretches as the tendering process is likely to take time. He suggested making Vega City Mall junction signal-free by constructing an underpass and flyover.

HC upholds 'Leave India' notice against US national

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The petitioner argued that authorities erroneously stamped his visa as a tourist visa, and that issuance of the notice infringes upon his legitimate expectations

Bengaluru: The high court has upheld a 'Leave India' notice issued to a United States national for violating visa conditions.

A foreign national entering India on a tourist visa is bound by the restrictions attached to that visa and cannot, under the guise of subsequent arrangements, engage in business activities in violation of the law. Observing this, Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum directed the petitioner to comply with the impugned notice and leave India forthwith, in accordance with the law, while dismissing the petition filed by American citizen Joseph Ignazzio Zambuto. The petitioner had challenged the notice dated Feb 19, 2026, which was issued under Section 7(2) of the Immigration and Foreigners Act-2025.

According to the petitioner, he had been granted a business visa and, therefore, was entitled to remain in India until Jan 15, 2027, the date on which the visa is set to expire. He said he married a Mauritius citizen of Indian origin and had departed India on Jan 15, 2026. Subsequently, he re-entered the country on Jan 26, 2026, after obtaining a business visa valid until Jan 15, 2027. Since his re-entry, he claimed to be residing in Kadugodi, Bengaluru, and engaging in business-related activities, including meetings with stakeholders, with the stated objective of establishing a customer service centre in the city.

His grievance is that the authorities erroneously stamped his visa as a tourist visa, and that issuance of the 'Leave India' notice infringes upon his legitimate expectations. He contended that the action not only affects his individual rights but also runs counter to India's broader economic and investment policies.

Additional solicitor general Aravind Kamath, along with Aditya Singh, central govt counsel, submitted that the petitioner had entered India on Aug 1, 2025, on an e-tourist visa and thereafter engaged in commercial operations. These included entering into contracts, employing personnel, and undertaking monetary transactions in connection with business activities carried out under the name and style of M/s Etta Global Partners LLC, a company stated to be registered in Puerto Rico, a territory of the US, and having no registered office in India.

They contended that these acts constitute a clear breach of visa conditions, which expressly prohibit engaging in any business, employment, or commercial activity while on an e-tourist visa. It was on account of these violations that the competent authority, in the exercise of its statutory powers, issued the impugned 'Leave India' notice, strictly in accordance with the procedure established by law.

The material on record indicates that, during the validity of e-tourist visa, the petitioner engaged in activities that are impermissible under the visa regime. Documents show that he employed personnel, paid salaries, entered into contracts, and leased premises to carry on business operations — acts that fall outside the scope of an e-tourist visa and violate its conditions.

BENGALURU & MANGALURU SIZZLE AS SUMMER BLAZES ON

Syed Asif & Ravi Posavanike

BEATING THE HEAT BLUES: Hats on, umbrellas up, sunglasses firmly in place — Bengaluru is embracing full summer mode. The city recorded a maximum temperature of 35.2°C Wednesday, about 1.2°C above normal, marking one of the hottest days of the season so far. Relief is not in sight, as IMD forecasts temperatures to remain in a similar range over the coming days. (Extreme right) As summer holidays kicked off, two children in Mangaluru spent Wednesday teaching their sister to ride a bicycle on a quiet interior street

Groundwater woes: 11 taluks are critical

▶Continued from page 1

Another 11 taluks were marked critical, 36 semi-critical, while 145 were classified as safe with extraction below 70%. The assessment was carried out jointly by Central Ground Water Board and state groundwater directorate.

"Karnataka has recorded a significant decline in groundwater usage alongside a notable increase in annual recharge capacity," minor irrigation minister N S Boseraju said after releasing the report. The increase in recharge capacity has been attributed to policy interventions and sustained conservation measures.

Water quality concerns

The report highlights water quality concerns in 86 taluks. Salinity was detected in 17 taluks, nitrate contamination in 41, fluoride in 15 and uranium traces in 13 taluks. Nitrate contamination was found in parts of Bengaluru Urban, including Bengaluru North and mainly in Yelahanka.

Salinity issues were reported in districts such as Bagalkot, Ballari and Raichur, while fluoride and uranium contamination were spread across multiple districts including Tumakuru, Mandya and Chikkaballapur.

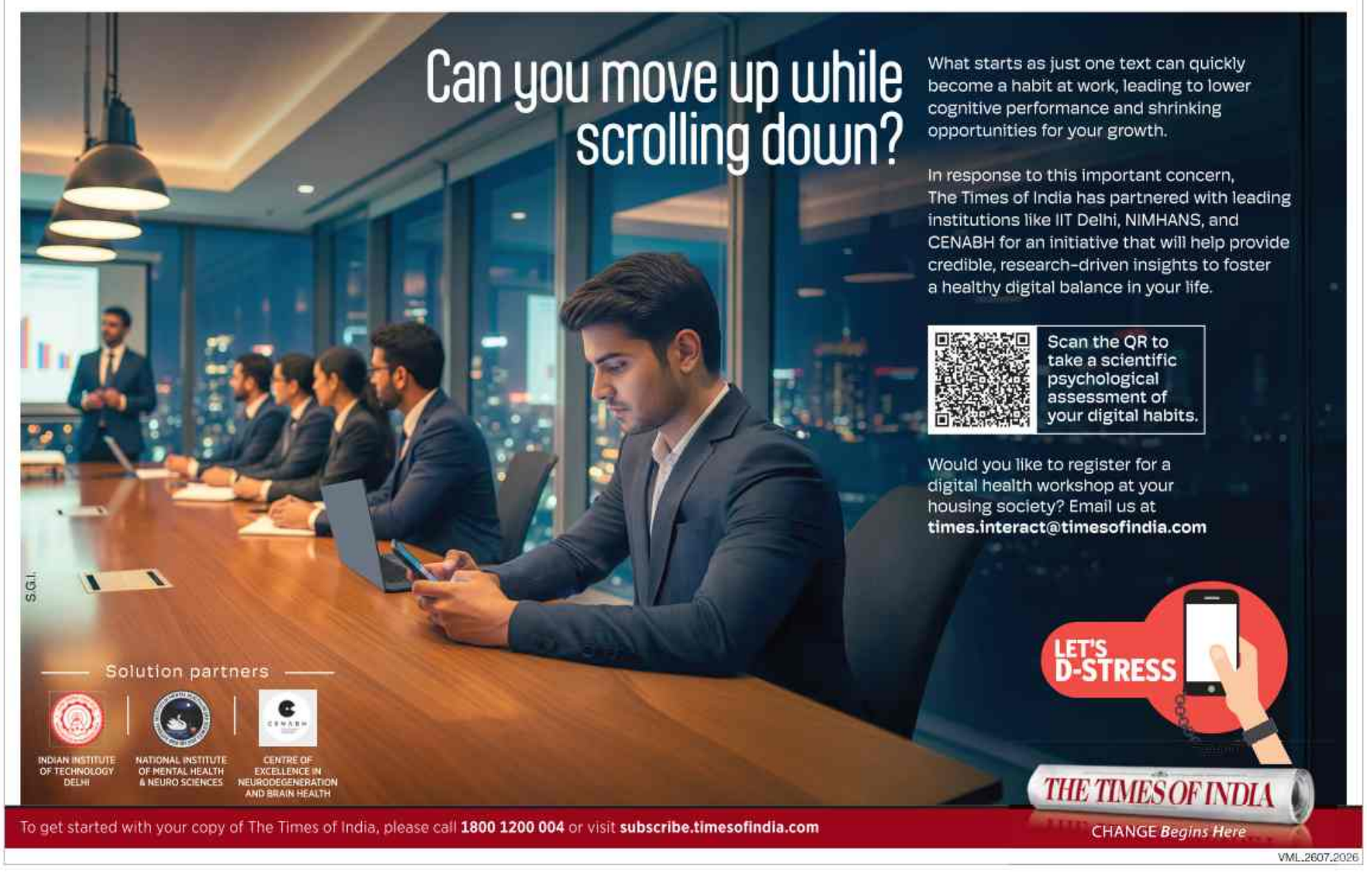
Boseraju said improved recharge was driven by expansion of conservation infrastructure. "The gains are the result of good rainfall, focused policy interventions and large-scale water conservation initiatives implemented over the past two years by the state govt," the minister said.

Four Bangla men sentenced to 3-yr RI

Bengaluru: A special court of National Investigation Agency in Bengaluru Wednesday sentenced four Bangladeshi nationals in a transnational human trafficking case. They are Zakir Khan, Badal Houladar, Kabir Talukdar and Mohammed Bachchu Gharami.

They were sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment and fined Rs 20,000 each under provisions of Foreigners Act and Passports (Entry into India) Act.

The convicts pleaded guilty of illegally entering India from Bangladesh via Benapole, Jashore and Akhaura border points. They fraudulently obtained Indian IDs and were operating a waste-segregation unit. TNN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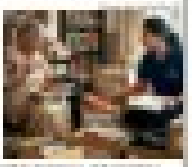
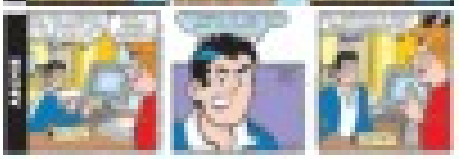
Yoga, sound baths & spa ceremonies: Wedding or a holistic wellness retreat?

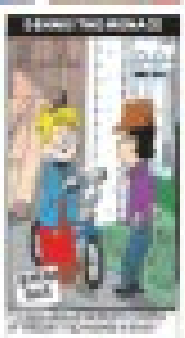
The art of holding on and the business of letting go

POV



LEISURE





Eastern marsh harrier takes rare flight over Hesaraghatta

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Bengaluru: A year after Hesaraghatta grassland on the city's outskirts was notified as a conservation reserve, the last remaining grassland ecosystem of Bengaluru is steadily evolving into a thriving biodiversity hotspot, offering renewed hope for conservationists.

Underscoring this ecological revival is the recent sighting of the rare Eastern marsh harrier (Circus spilonotus) by city-based birdwatchers SNS Murthy and J Harish Kumar during their weekend exploration around Hesaraghatta Lake on March 15 and 26. What initially appeared to be a routine observation of raptors later turned into one of the rarest documented sightings in the region. Murthy said, "We started our walk around the lake at 4pm and spotted several winter migrants such as the Pallid harrier, Montagu's harrier and Western marsh harrier, species commonly recorded in the area. But around 6.05pm, we noticed a distinct individual that stood out for its bulkier build and different flight profile."

Credit: Harish Kumar

The Eastern marsh harrier species, seldom recorded in southern India, is largely documented along the eastern coastline, particularly off Chennai, making its presence near Bengaluru highly unusual

RARE GLIMPSE: Bird watchers SNS Murthy (inset: right) and J Harish Kumar spotted the bird during their weekend exploration around Hesaraghatta Lake in March

The duo managed to photograph the bird as it moved across the grassland before being chased away by other harriers. However, follow-up visits failed to relocate the individual. "We were unsure if it was just a variation of the Western marsh harrier. But experts whom we consulted clarified it was indeed Eastern marsh harrier based on images, flight shots and consultation with raptor experts. A few even suggested the possibility of it being a hybrid with the usual Western marsh harrier, an extremely rare phenomenon with limited global documentation," Murthy told **TOI**.

"These raptors are known for their low, gliding hunting behaviour over marshy and grassland habitats, further highlighting the ecological suitability of Hesaraghatta's recovering landscape," he said. A migratory species, Eastern marsh harrier breeds across northeastern China, Mongolia, southeast Siberia and Japan. "Their breeding season starts in April and is over by monsoon. Even though there has been news about interbreeding of Western and Eastern marsh harriers, there is very little documentation on this," said a birder from south Bengaluru.

The sighting not only highlights the ecological value of Hesaraghatta, but also reinforces the need to protect Bengaluru's rapidly shrinking grassland habitats.

daCunha/AB/1094

Metro race: Bengaluru slips to third position

Mumbai India's 2nd Largest Network Now

Times News Network

Pic for representation

RUNNING LATE? Namma Metro runs a 96-km network with 83 stations, of which 19km of Yellow Line was added last year

Bengaluru: Namma Metro has slipped to third place in terms of operational network length, losing its position as the country's second-largest system to Mumbai Metro.

The shift comes after Mumbai Metro commissioned new corridors, including the Dahisar–Kashigaon stretch and the first section of Line 2B (Mandale to Diamond Garden), extending connectivity to Thane district and linking the eastern suburbs. With the addition of roughly 10km, Mumbai's operational network has now crossed the 100-km mark, trailing only Delhi Metro, which remains the largest in the country with 416 km and 303 stations.

Namma Metro operates a 96-km network with 83 stations, of which about 19 km — part of the Yellow Line — was added in the past year.

15 years, 89km

Namma Metro began operations in 2011 with a 7-km elevated stretch from Byappanahalli to MG Road. Over the past 15 years, it has expanded to about 89km, averaging roughly 6km of additions per year. In contrast, Mumbai Metro, which started operations in 2014, has now overtaken Bengaluru's network in terms of operational length.

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (BMRCL) has often faced criticism for missing project deadlines in a city where private vehicle numbers are rising rapidly.

BMRCL took at least three years to open the Yellow Line due to construction delays and non-availability of the required number of coaches. As a result, trains are currently running at a 9-minute frequency during peak hours, with passengers expected to wait a few months for full-fledged operations.

7-KM STRETCH IN NEXT PHASE

In the next phase, BMRCL plans to open a 7-km stretch of the Pink Line from Kalena Agrahara to Tavarekere on Bannerghatta Road. Unlike Yellow Line, there is no shortage of coaches for this elevated section. The corporation has already received five train sets and is in the process of obtaining clearance for the rolling stock, aiming for a partial opening by mid-2026.

BMRCL is also planning to operationalise the Blue Line stretch from Silk Board to KR Pura by 2026. However, the remaining section from KR Pura to Kempegowda International Airport has been pushed to 2027. Once these lines are operational, Bengaluru's Metro network is expected to reach nearly 175km in length.

II PU-1 results out today

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Karnataka II PU-1 (grade 12) results for 2025-26 will be announced Thursday, 3pm.

Students can access results on **karresults.nic.in** and also via KarnatakaOne mobile app. The results will be sent by the board to registered mobile numbers of students through WhatsApp or SMS.

For the first time, marks cards of students will be available through DigiLocker at 3pm. These can be downloaded from **digilocker.gov.in**.

The result sheets will be sent to colleges at 3pm.

Trucks collide, driver dies

Times News Network

Bengaluru: A driver died in an early-morning accident near Mysuru Road Satellite Bus Stand after he drove his truck at high speed and rammed a stationary lorry at a signal. Vijay Kumar, the victim, was driving the truck loaded with groceries and other items and heading towards a godown in Rajarajeshwari Nagar.

Another truck with medicines had stopped at a signal near the satellite bus stand when Kumar's vehicle crashed into it. The impact was so severe that the front portion of Kumar's truck was mangled. The accident led to traffic congestion in the area for some time.

Cop cracks down on indiscipline, tells 17 personnel to stand in sun

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Bengaluru/Chitradurga: A show of defiance against a woman sub-inspector turned into a lesson in discipline for 17 police personnel in the state after she made it clear that insubordination won't be tolerated: She ordered all of them to stand in the sun and lift their arms!

Photos of the constables with their arms up have gone viral, triggering a debate on the action: Did she do the right thing or was she too stubborn?

At the centre of the incident is sub-inspector Netravati, posted at Chikkajajur police station in Chitradurga district. The drama unfolded during morning roll call Sunday when one of the constables allegedly addressed her disrespectfully. Unable to identify him, she demanded the group name the person responsible.

TOI

TEACHING A LESSON

When met with silence, she decided to act. Netravati ordered the group to stand in attention with rifles held aloft outside police station building for nearly two hours. She reportedly questioned each cop during the exercise to identify errant cop. "Even she stood in the sunlight during questioning," a senior police officer said.

The intense drill took a toll on some personnel, with a few, including those with health conditions like diabetes, reporting uneasiness. They were moved indoors and treated.

While the incident sparked debate on social media over the severity of punishment, senior officers largely backed her firm stance. "Netravati did the right thing. We are a disciplined force and such incidents (usage of singular against a woman officer) cannot be tolerated," a senior police officer told **TOI**.

SI transferred

The matter prompted an official review. Superintendent of police, Chitradurga, Ranjith Kumar Bandaru said, "I have directed the DySP to probe the matter and submit a report."

On Wednesday evening, the home department buckled under pressure and ordered her transfer to the district police control room. A retired police officer said: "Ideally, the 17 personnel should have been transferred to other stations, but govt chose to move move her out, and that is unfortunate."

Hoax bomb threat triggers panic at KIA

Times News Network

Bengaluru: An email threatening to trigger explosions at Kempegowda International Airport sparked panic, prompting swift action by authorities to ensure passenger safety. After a thorough check, the threat was declared a hoax.

According to the complaint filed by airport staff Tuesday, the threat email was received at 11.14am on April 5 at the airport's customer engagement centre's email ID, appellateauthority@bialairport.com and customer.service@carebyblr.com from seema_kunjan@outlook.com.

According to officials, the email warned of explosive devices planted on the airport premises and called for immediate evacuation of VIP passengers and staff.

IAF officer's house burgled as kin attend promotion event

Times News Network

Bengaluru: An Indian Air Force officer's house was burgled while his family was attending his promotion ceremony in Hyderabad.

According to a complaint filed by warrant officer Mruthunjaya Narayan Singh, a resident of Kamagondanahalli and posted at the Air Force Station, Hyderabad, Singh was promoted on April 1. His wife and children had locked the house on the afternoon of March 31 and left for Hyderabad. On the morning of April 2, neighbours noticed signs of a break-in and informed Singh's wife.

Before leaving, the family had packed their valuables, including gold and silver ornaments, in a box placed under a cot.

The family returned to the city the same evening by flight and found both the main door and the bedroom door broken open. Household items were scattered across the rooms, suggesting a thorough search by the intruders.

They discovered that gold ornaments—including two lockets, two pairs of earrings, and a chain— with around 500 grams of silver articles, were missing.

3 from B'luru drown in lake

Three persons from RT Nagar, north Bengaluru, drowned in Vijayapura's Bhoothanala Lake Wednesday evening.

Muhammad Hayat, 12, Haider Pasha, 32, and Abdul Khuddus, 35, were part of a 14-member group that had come to Vijayapura for a trip.

The accident occurred near the lake. As Hayat slipped into the water, others tried to help him and all three ended up drowning. TNN

Network issue shuts down rail reservation office in BSK

Times News Network

Bengaluru: For railway passengers living in the neighbourhoods of south Bengaluru, the reservation office at Banashankari was the go-to spot for ticket booking. However, the office remained shut Wednesday, disappointing tatkal aspirants in particular.

Located on the first floor of the BDA complex in Banashankari, the office provides offline railway ticket reservation. "Reservation office at Banashankari BDA complex, Bengaluru, closed for 5-6 days. No update on resumption. Nearest tatkal centre ~5 km away, making access difficult," an user posted on X.

When **TOI** visited the office, the AC tatkal section was completely locked, and while the sleeper class tatkal and common reservation counters were open, they were unoperational. Under the waiting sheds rested stray dogs, hinting that the office hasn't been used for at least some days.

"Reservation counters at Banashankari BDA complex reservation office are not working since BSNL link is down as the optical fibre cable has been cut. Restoration of the same is under progress," an South Western Railway (SWR) official clarified.

Maintenance teams have been working in the office since Tuesday, though it was not restored till Wednesday evening. SWR expects the counters to be functional from Friday and has advised passengers to make use of the reservation office at Jayanagar. "We are working to resolve this issue and will keep you updated with any progress and improvements," BSNL stated.

Father suspects foul play in BTech student's death

Times News Network

Bengaluru: A day after a 19-year-old BTech student fell to his death from the ninth floor of his hostel in Yelahanka New Town, his father blamed the teenager's educational institution, Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), for "not telling the truth" behind his suspicious death.

'NO DEEP WOUNDS'

The victim, Lakshya Mishra, fell from the college hostel building at Govindapura around 1.30am Tuesday. He was shifted to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

His father, Anjani Kumar Mishra, claimed there are mismatches between the statements made by MAHE and what he saw on the ground.

"I received a call around 3.30am saying my son had fallen from the ninth floor. After 30 minutes, another call was made to declare his death. When I saw his body in the hospital, there were no signs (deep wounds) of him falling from the ninth floor. Then I inspected the window from where he allegedly fell. It was so narrow that even a child would find it difficult to sneak in. Manipal people (MAHE officials) are not telling the truth," Mishra said in a video.

A senior police officer said, "CCTV footage shows Lakshya walking alone on the ninth floor around 1am. It is too early to arrive at any conclusion."

The institution's spokesperson declined to comment on the issue when contacted by **TOI**.

Beyond tumours: Hospitals turn to psycho-oncology for cancer care

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: A patient in her 50s, diagnosed with colon cancer that spread across her body, was told by doctors that her time was limited. The news was delivered to her along with her husband and two daughters. Unable to bear the pain, she said she did not want to live anymore and began asking for medication that could help her die peacefully. At that moment, a psycho-oncologist stepped in to support her — helping her find hope and emotional strength for as long as she lived.

"After that, we continued to work with the family to deal with their grief. These are sensitive and critical times for the families," said Shilpi Saraswat, clinical psychologist, Sakra World Hospital.

Beyond the physical toll, cancer places an enormous burden on the mental health of patients. To address this, cancer treatment centres are increasingly bringing psycho-oncologists on board to support both patients and their families through the journey.

WORLD PSYCHO-ONCOLOGY DAY

"Currently, the biggest barrier in India is finance. Psycho-oncology services are often not covered by insurance, making them an out-of-pocket expense. Even modest costs can be burdensome for patients already dealing with high treatment expenses. Institutional constraints such as return on investment and manpower costs also play a role, although awareness and acceptance are gradually improving

Brindha Sitaram | GROUP DIRECTOR, PSYCHO-ONCOLOGY SERVICES, HCG CANCER CENTRE

Globally, evidence suggests 3 out of 5 patients experience significant emotional distress that requires professional support, said Brindha Sitaram, group director, Psycho-oncology Services, HCG Cancer Centre, KR Road. She added, "Emotional well-being varies across different phases — during diagnosis, treatment, while awaiting reports, and even in survivorship. Our internal study of around 2,500 patients showed 92% experienced emotional difficulties, with 52% facing moderate to severe distress."

In some cases, psychological distress can even interfere with treatment. Anuvinda Sadanandan, consultant psycho-oncologist, Apollo Hospitals, shared the case of a young woman diagnosed with breast cancer. "During the initial phase of her treatment, she struggled with severe anxiety, which led her to refuse further treatment. On evaluation, the primary reason for her refusal was fear — fear related to the diagnosis and concerns about her prognosis," she said.

She added with structured psychological support, including guided therapy, coping strategies, and cognitive behavioural therapy, the patient gradually regained emotional stability. She also became more resilient and actively engaged in her recovery process. "As we know, a cancer diagnosis often brings a wide range of psychological distress, including anxiety, fear, depression, uncertainty, body image concerns, and loss of identity. Addressing these aspects is crucial because mental well-being directly influences treatment adherence, recovery, and overall quality of life," Anuvinda said.

In terminal cases, however, the nature of conversations shifts significantly. Shilpi Saraswat said, "In terminal patients, a psycho-oncologist helps manage fear of death and existential stress such as concerns about family. The focus shifts towards comfort, acceptance and emotional closure. We support patients in expressing their wishes, while also facilitating family conversations, which can be difficult as family members are often in denial or at different stages of grief."

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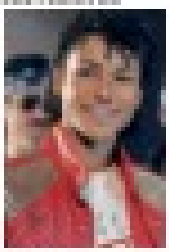

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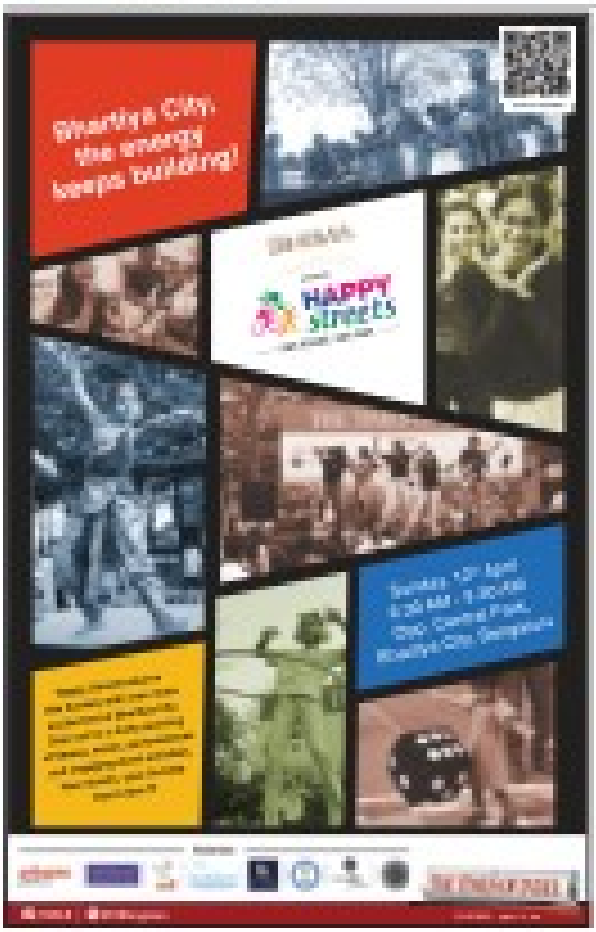

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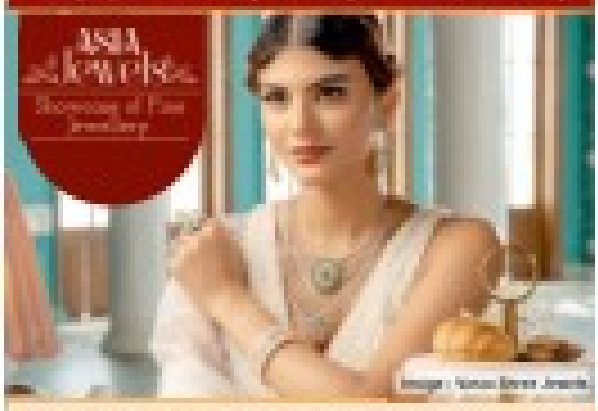

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Davanagere South, Bagalkot to vote today amid tight Cong-BJP contest

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Davanagere/Bagalkot: The fate of candidates in a high-stakes battle will be sealed Thursday when by-polls are held to Davanagere South and Bagalkot assembly seats. Voting is scheduled from 7am to 6pm and results will be declared on May 4. Authorities said all arrangements are in place.

DANCE OF DEMOCRACY

Officials said priority has been on ensuring free and fair elections, with security tightened at polling stations. Davanagere South has 2,31,132 voters and 284 polling stations, including 76 identified as sensitive. Bagalkot has 2,59,360 voters and 322 polling stations. Transport and logistical arrangements have been made for polling personnel in both constituencies.

The byelections were necessitated following the demise of Congress legislators Shamanur Shivashankarappa and HY Meti. With public campaigning ending Tuesday, candidates and party workers intensified door-to-door outreach Wednesday, making last-mile appeals to voters.

The twin contests have emerged as a prestige and personal battle between the governing Congress and opposition BJP, with the outcome expected to influence local body elections, including the Greater Bengaluru Authority polls slated later this year, besides zilla, taluk and gram panchayat elections.

In Davanagere South, 25 candidates, including 14 Muslims, are in the fray, but the main contest is between Congress' Samarth Shamanur, son of minister SS Mallikarjun and MP Prabha, and BJP's Srinivas Dasakariyappa.

In Bagalkot, experienced BJP functionary Veeranna Charantimath is taking on Umesh Meti, son of late former minister HY Meti.

Senior functionaries from both Congress and BJP, including chief minister Siddaramaiah, his deputy DK Shivakumar, Union minister Pralhad Joshi, B Sriramulu, Govind Karjol, Vijayanand Kashappanavar, former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, led extensive campaigns over the past 10 days, focusing on local issues and achievements while trading allegations.

The governing party has historically performed strongly in bypolls in the state. In bypolls in 2024, Congress won all three seats. BJP functionaries, however, said there is strong anti-incumbency against the Congress govt and expect a favourable outcome.

₹152CR-WORTH SEIZURES, 65 FIRs AS VIGIL PEAKS

Bengaluru: Until Wednesday afternoon, enforcement agencies seized cash, liquor and other items worth over Rs 152 crore, while registering multiple cases linked to violations ahead of the bypolls, the office of the chief electoral officer revealed.

Authorities said surveillance teams and police booked 65 FIRs related to the seizures with the excise department alone registering 36 heinous cases, 40 cases for breach of licence conditions and 205 cases under Section 15(a) of the Karnataka Excise Act, 1965.

Some 20 vehicles, including two-wheelers, were seized. Data from enforcement agencies shows cash seizures stood at Rs 1.1 crore, while over 150 lakh litres of liquor with an estimated value of Rs 41.1 crore were confiscated. Seizures categorised as others amounted to Rs 1.5 crore. No drugs or precious metals were reported seized.

On the public grievance front, the cVIGIL app recorded 44 complaints as of 1.18 pm on Wednesday, of which 37 were found to be correct and disposed of, while seven were dropped. No complaints were pending. Through the National Grievances Redressal System portal, 58 complaints were received, with 49 disposed of and nine under process. Under the ENCORE system for election-related permissions, authorities received 177 applications, of which 174 were approved, and two rejected. Officials also acted on media inputs, with two actionable reports each from television and social media platforms.

Picture for representation

KEY FIGURES

D'GERE SOUTH
Voters 2,31,132
Polling stations 284
Sensitive stations 76

BAGALKOT
Voters 2,59,360
Polling stations 322
Polling staff 1,564

CM defends release of funds for guarantees

Bengaluru: Chief minister Siddaramaiah defended the release of funds for the guarantee schemes funds despite the model code of conduct being in force, insisting the guarantee schemes "are not byelection announcements but a part of ongoing govt schemes".

He said funds are regularly transferred in a transparent and structured manner and in accordance with scheme guidelines.

"This is governance — a direct investment in human dignity, household stability and economic participation — not inducement," Siddaramaiah said in a post on X. He accused BJP of double standards saying that while the saffron party claims the guarantees are "freebies", it copies the same schemes and implements them in states which they govern. "But what is deeply concerning is the selective approach of the Election Commission of India," Siddaramaiah said. "In states like Maharashtra and Bihar, cash transfer schemes were announced or fast tracked just before elections, with direct financial benefits extended to voters. These are well-documented patterns. Yet, ECI remained silent and allowed them to proceed without scrutiny."

He added: "When BJP or NDA govts act, the ECI looks the other way. But when Karnataka fufils its promises, the same ECI becomes hyperactive. This exposes a clear bias." TNN

Cash crunch hits farm co-ops, govt plans interest rate hike

Sandeep.Moudgal
@timesofindia.com

Getty Images

FINANCIAL STRAIN: NABARD assistance dropped from Rs 5,600 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 3,236 crore in 2024-25, compounding the problem

Bengaluru: Mounting financial stress among primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACS) has pushed the govt to reconsider its decision to cut their loan profit margins, with a proposal now on the table to raise it from 1.75% to 3%.

The move comes amid declining financial support from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and growing concerns over the viability of grassroots cooperative institutions that play a key role in farm credit delivery.

The reduction in margins was introduced in 2024-25, but officials say the decision has strained PACS finances and many now face an "existential crisis" due to shrinking income streams. Many societies are struggling to meet basic operational costs such as salaries, office rent and even stationery purchases.

"Karnataka has about 50,000 PACS but about 14,000 are defunct," a senior cooperation department official said. "PACS are demanding an increase in interest share on govt-funded loans given to farmers at 0%. The cooperation department is seeking finance department approval to hike it back to 3%."

Responding during the recent budget session, chief minister Siddaramaiah said the state was reviewing the margin structure and is studying practices in other states.

"Considering profit margins of 0.75%, 1.25%, 1.8% and 2% in PACs in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra respectively, officials have sought more information to increase investments in local PACs," he said in a written reply.

Capacity to pay norms

Siddaramaiah also acknowledged operational challenges faced by PACS but indicated that diversification could provide some relief. "As per Prof Vaidyanathan Committee recommendations, PACs that fall under NABARD have been asked to introduce 'capacity to pay' norms and set aside 0.5% of profit margins for human resources," he said. "However, with profit margin reduced to 0.25% there has been a slight reduction in available resources. But this cannot be a reason for PACS to shut down."

To strengthen revenue streams, the govt is encouraging PACS to expand into allied activities such as running Jan Aushadhi centres, multi-service outlets, Kisan Samriddhi Kendras, warehousing and fuel distribution.

The financial strain has been compounded by a sharp fall in NABARD assistance. Funding dropped from Rs 5,600 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 3,236 crore in 2024-25, impacting the interest subsidy pipeline to the cooperative sector. Allocations for 2025-26 are yet to be finalised. "NABARD has again not given any indication on the extent of funds it will release to the state this year," officials said. "It appears the state will have to step in to provide financial assistance to farmers and farming cooperatives."

The proposed revision in margins is now seen as a key step to stabilise the cooperative credit system as the state govt weighs a larger role in rural finance.

Delimitation set to delay gram panchayat elections

Santoshkumar.B@timesofindia.com

TOI

MORE DELAYS: Previous elections to these gram panchayats were held in Dec 2020. Their five-year term ended in Jan and Feb this year

Bengaluru: Elections to over 5,700 gram panchayats are likely to be delayed — till the end of the year — as the govt is still in the process of finalising the number of seats and boundaries.

Rural development and panchayat raj department officials said the exercise could take up to six months, citing the upgradation of several gram panchayats (GPs) into town panchayats and the merger of some into urban local bodies.

Officials say the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Delimitation Commission will assess all factors before issuing a final notification. The commission will hold adalats and invite public opinions to finalise boundaries and the number of members in each gram panchayat.

The panel has been tasked with determining territorial constituencies, allocating seats based on population, defining ward boundaries, and ensuring equitable population distribution while taking geographical and administrative factors into account. The commission recently met with department officials and deputy commissioners (DCs) of all districts, directing them to collect the required data to expedite the delimitation exercise. Karnataka State Election Commission (SEC) officials also participated in the meeting.

The commission will review the data submitted by DCs and make recommendations. The process to finalise the number of members and boundaries is expected to take at least two months.

Only after this, the govt can proceed with assigning reservations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and women. The reservation process may take three to four months. Sources say if the process is completed as planned, elections could be held by the end of the year.

N Nomesh Kumar, director, Panchayat Raj-I and an ex-officio member of the delimitation commission, said efforts are under way to complete the exercise as quickly as possible. "There are 5,943 GPs and more than 95,000 wards," he said.

The previous gram panchayat polls in 2020 were held in two phases — on Dec 22 and 27 — covering over 5,700 GPs and nearly 93,000 wards. Their five-year term ended between Jan and Feb this year. At present, administrators appointed by DCs are managing the day-to-day affairs.

Meanwhile, elections to Greater Bengaluru's five civic corporations, pending for more than four years now, are likely to be held in June.

Zilla and taluk panchayat elections across the state are also pending for over five years. Additionally, 236 city municipal councils await elections.

SHORT TAKES

Trekker's disappearance suspicious, says BJP

Kodagu BJP functionaries demanded a thorough investigation into the case of Kerala's GS Sharanya, who went missing for three days during a trek to Tadiandamol hill in Kodagu district and was later found. P Danoj, who filed a complaint at Napoklu police station alongside other party members, said her survival in a dense forest without food for more than 72 hours raised questions. He also cited concerns over Naxal activity in the region. Napoklu BJP Shakti Kendra president Ambikaryappa alleged the incident could be a "publicity stunt" aimed at harming Kodagu's tourism image.

TOI

MIFFED: BJP Yuva Morcha Bengaluru City members Wednesday protested Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's remarks during an election rally in Assam earlier this week

Priyank Kharge defends dad's 'poisonous snake' remark

Minister Priyank Kharge objected to remarks made by Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma against Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, calling them "irresponsible" and caste-driven. Defending his father's "poisonous snake" remark, Priyank said it was metaphorical and targeted ideologies that spread hatred. He alleged BJP brass "carry a sense of caste privilege influenced by the RSS", adding that Sarma's views had changed after his association with the organisation. He said Sarma's social background insulated him from accountability and accused RSS of promoting a "Chaturvarna" mindset. Kharge said such ideologies are detrimental to minorities, backward classes, Dalits, Adivasis and women.

No auto LPG shortage: Govt

The govt urged auto drivers, owners and the public not to heed rumours of an auto LPG shortage, insisting the state has adequate stocks. In a statement, food, civil supplies and consumer disputes department said reports of long queues at fuel stations were "false" and based on misinformation. While some private suppliers are facing shortages, public sector oil companies — IOC, BPCL and HPCL — have stepped up supplies, it said. Daily distribution has increased from 56.6 tonnes to 83.6 tonnes. The government appealed to the public to remain calm and cooperate. Minister KH Muniyappa is scheduled to hold a meeting on Friday to address issues. However, there have been long queues outside fuel stations in Bengaluru. This has been attributed to private suppliers hiking prices of the fuel.

Waste management outsourced, but villages bear brunt

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Getty Images

A STINK: Outside Bengaluru, urban local bodies generate 7,204 tonnes of waste daily, of which only 83.3% is processed. Most is dumped in villages

Bengaluru: The state govt's push to outsource urban waste management to private players is yielding mixed results. While processing gains have been significant, persistent gaps are pushing unhandled waste into rural areas.

Municipal administration minister Rahim Khan said waste management has been outsourced in 98 cities under a hire model, with the govt paying private agencies between Rs 234 and Rs 1,227 per tonne across three companies.

The state has 321 urban local bodies and four notified areas. Detailed project reports for 222 ULBs have been cleared, and 94 with more than 20,000 tonnes of legacy waste were identified for tendering. Of these, 82 ULBs are operational under the outsourced model and have collectively bioremediated 36.2 lakh tonnes of legacy waste.

Despite this progress, inefficiencies remain. Outside Bengaluru, ULBs generate 7,204 tonnes of waste daily, of which 83.3% is processed. However, 293 tonnes remain uncollected, and of the 7,011 tonnes collected, 923 tonnes are left unprocessed. Another 124 ULBs with smaller waste volumes continue to rely on in-house systems.

A concern flagged by legislators in the recent budget session of the legislature is the spillover impact on rural areas. Though laws prohibit open dumping and burning, enforcement remains weak, allowing unprocessed urban waste to be dumped in villages.

DS Arun, BJP MLC, said, "City waste is being dumped in villages. The issue is only getting worse as management appears to have been taken over by a mafia." He pointed to structural issues in the system, including underestimation of waste generation. "Corporations often miscalculate waste by relying on population estimates, resulting in tenders for only about 50% of actual waste," Arun said.

Lack of segregation

He also highlighted poor segregation at source and weak oversight. "Contractors, who are expected to upcycle and recycle waste, often dump unprocessed waste in landfills and nearby villages. This defeats the purpose of waste management," he said. Arun added that rural communities are bearing an unfair burden despite following relatively sustainable waste practices. Khan said the govt would take appropriate action to address the concerns.

Tiff over sudden turn: Youths assault 52-year-old bizman

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A 52-year-old businessman was allegedly assaulted in a road-rage incident in Kodigehalli Tuesday night, prompting police to launch a manhunt for the main suspect.

According to a complaint filed by Ajit Singh, police have detained a few individuals while efforts continue to trace the prime attacker. The incident occurred at 8.30pm as Singh was approaching his apartment in Tatanagar.

A heated argument broke out after Singh allegedly made a sudden right turn. Two youths on a motorcycle, coming from the opposite direction, objected, accusing him of failing to use an indicator. The altercation quickly escalated, with both sides exchanging abuses.

Police said the youths repeatedly questioned Singh about his "local" status and demanded identity proof.

"Though Singh responded in fluent Kannada, they continued to ask if he was a non-local," an officer said, adding that more youths soon joined the group.

The confrontation turned violent when the group allegedly assaulted Singh, beating him and hitting his legs with a wooden board pulled from a nearby chicken shop. As Singh attempted to drive towards his apartment, the assailants reportedly chased him and issued further threats.

The suspects fled when a Hoysala patrol vehicle reached the spot after being alerted by Singh's family.

A case has been registered at Kodigehalli police station under Sections 115 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 116 (grievous hurt) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Police said some associates involved in the attack have been detained and the prime suspect will be apprehended soon.

Ex-PCCF calls idea impractical, says it does not solve problem of conflict

▶ Continued from page 1

At a time when conflicts have peaked not just in Karnataka but in other parts of India as well, there is an urgent need to explore all possible scientific options. This includes population-control measures in a limited and targeted manner," Khandre said.

With a similar proposal pending before SC, he noted: "Karnataka will seek expert consultation before submitting any formal proposal as it is imperative to tread cautiously."

Experts divided on feasibility

Former PCCF and chief wildlife warden of Karnataka, Braj Kishore Singh, said: "The idea seems to be impractical as it does not solve the problem of conflict. How many can we capture in the wild and sterilise? Rather, the govt must think on the lines of clearing encroachments."

Conservation biologist Sanjay Gubbi of Holematthi Nature Foundation added: "Wildlife sterilisation is unlikely to be effective as a standalone measure. It may be considered on a limited scale, but only alongside habitat protection, curbing unscientific management practices, preventing poaching and halting indiscriminate translocation of wildlife."

A first in Maharashtra for leopards

Maharashtra has already secured approval from the ministry of environment, forest and climate change for a leopard birth-control initiative, a first-of-its-kind initiative.

The pilot project in Junnar, Pune district, uses immunocontraception. The method involves darting leopards with a contraceptive that blocks fertility for two-three years, followed by booster doses to extend effectiveness.

Globally, similar experiments have been conducted on elephants at Addo Elephant National Park in South Africa.

Kalaburagi VB may terminate at KSR

Anush.S@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Two Vande Bharat trains originating from the city could see major change in timings and operations. In addition, Bengaluru-Kalaburagi VB might get its much-demanded change of terminal from SMVT Bengaluru to KSR Bengaluru.

Earlier this month, South Western Railway (SWR) proposed a new timetable and change in terminals for the premium service to Kalaburagi and Belagavi from Bengaluru. The changes have to be cleared by the railway board before they are implemented.

As per the proposal, there will be no change in Belagavi VB's schedule: It will start at 5.35am from Belagavi and reach the state capital by 1.50pm; the return service will continue to start from Bengaluru at 2.20pm and reach Belagavi by 10.30pm. However, the train will not operate Thursdays, replacing its earlier maintenance day of Wednesday.

For the service from Kalaburagi, there will be a change in operational timings — the train is expected to start 10 minutes earlier at 6am. It will reach Bengaluru at 1.50pm instead of 2.10 pm. The return service will reach Kalaburagi at 10.40pm after leaving KSR Bengaluru by 2.40pm. The maintenance days for both trains will be different as per the proposal: 22231 Kalaburagi-Bengaluru VB won't run on Thursdays instead of Fridays and 22232 Bengaluru-Kalaburagi VB will take a break Wednesdays instead of Thursdays.

According to SWR, these changes are because of planned shift of train maintenance from Bengaluru to Belagavi.

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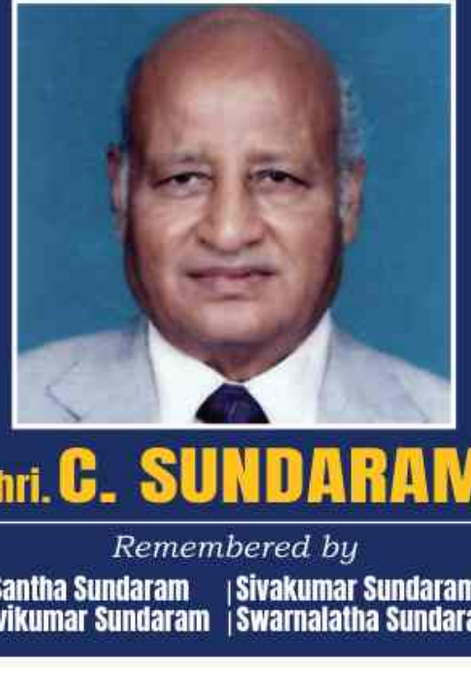

Shri. C. SUNDARAM

Remembered by
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OBITUARY

DEATH ANNIVERSARY

1st Death Anniversary

R SHANTHI
DOD - 20th April 2025
(Horamavu)
W/o G Ramakrishnan

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You live forever in our hearts.

Deeply Mourned by
Husband, Son, Daughter & Family

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SHARING MEMORIES

17th ANNIVERSARY
R.KESAVAN
06/01/1946 To 09/04/2009

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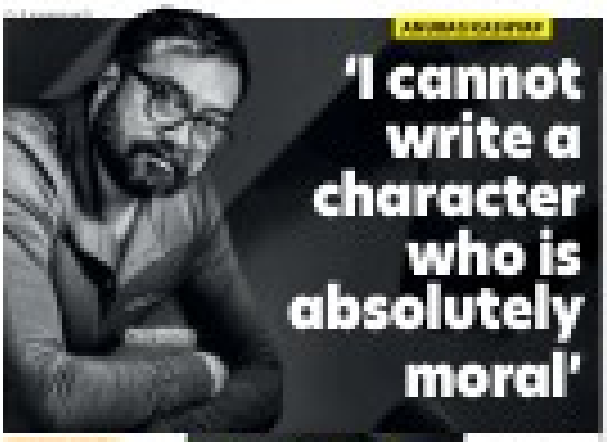

ANUPAMA KUNDOOR

'I cannot write a character who is absolutely moral'

'Animation is India's USP based on children's content'

'The Kannada film industry is not in very great shape at present right now'

Despite the backlash, fans show up for Ye's concert

Fans' unwavering support

Critics call out West

A concert marred by controversial remarks

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TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

RAGHAV CHADHA SPARKS TALKS OF YOUTH-BACKED POLITICAL PARTY AFTER SHARING INSTAGRAM POST

NITISH KUMAR WILL TAKE OATH AS RAJYA SABHA MP TOMORROW, SAYS BIHAR MINISTER VIJAY KUMAR

Saradha ponzi scheme 'kingpin' to be released after 13 yrs in jail

Kolkata: The alleged mastermind of Saradha ponzi scheme, Sudipto Sen, was granted bail in the last two pending cases on Tuesday by Calcutta high court after spending 13 years in jail, **reports Subrata Chattoraj & Srishti Lakhotia**.

"To deny bail now, in the face of a 'stalemate' admitted by the state, would be to sanction an indefinite life sentence without conviction," it said. Sen had earlier secured bail in 387 cases, including 77 probed by CBI.

Sen is accused of duping small investors through Saradha Group, which promised high returns before defaulting. The scam, which came to light in 2013, is estimated to have affected nearly 1.7 crore investors.

The court took note of serious lapses. In one case, the state admitted original records were missing. It has sent certain terms, like directing him to surrender his passport and barring him from leaving Bengal without permission. Any violation will lead to immediate cancellation of bail, HC said.

SC: PIL entertained in 2006, but would have been dismissed now

'For Lack Of Cause Of Action': SC On Sabarimala Issue

CJI Kant agreed but caveated by pointing out it was entertained in 2006 and there is verdict. 'We are tasked to determine the scope and ambit of judicial intervention in religious matters,' he said

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New Delhi: Acknowledging rampant misuse of public interest litigation for ulterior motives or for pursuing pet agendas, Supreme Court Wednesday said it would have dismissed a PIL petition if it had been filed by the lawyers' body presently challenging the Sabarimala custom of barring entry of women of menstruating age.

This remark came from a bench of CJI Surya Kant, Justices B V Nagarathna, M M Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, A G Masih, P B Varale, R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi when solicitor general Tushar Mehta said the custom was not challenged by a Lord Ayyappa devotee and argued that the apex court had struck it down as unconstitutional on a misreading and misapplication of 'constitutional morality' test to judicially inscrutable concept of faith, belief and religious custom.

The attributes of deity Ayyappa, which at Sabarimala are believed by devotees to be that of Naistik Brahmachari, cannot be scrutinised on the anvil of western imported concept of constitutional morality, which is applicable to test validity of the actions of the state or those of constitutional post holders, he said.

Justice Nagarathna agreed and said that even if the lawyers' body had filed a civil suit, it would have been dismissed for lack of cause of action. CJI Kant agreed but caveated by pointing out that the PIL was entertained two decades back in 2006 and there is a judgment of the court, "We are tasked to determine the scope and ambit of judicial intervention in religious matters," he said.

Mehta flagged the "corrupting" influence of western mindset on the judgment in Joseph Shine case, which decriminalised adultery on the grounds that the archaic provision violated women's dignity, liberty and equality by shackling her sexual freedom and burdening her with fidelity.

The solicitor general clarified that the provision could have been struck down on grounds of discrimination and that he would have had no objection to the outcome of the case. However, he said fidelity is applicable equally to a man and woman in marriage and that a provision curbing extra-marital affairs cannot be termed as shackling of sexual freedom.

What is more worrisome is that societal norms have been termed as 'mob morality' and inexplicably the court had used constitutional morality to strike down the provision, he said.

Justice Nagarathna said, "What was considered immoral and obscene in the 1950s is no longer considered so. That is now considered narrow-minded and old-fashioned. That is the problem of India today. But public morality is not static."

On the question whether a person not belonging to a religious denomination or religious group can question a practice of that religious denomination or religious group by filing a PIL, Mehta said PIL was devised by the top court in 1984 in Bandhua Mukti Morcha case as a tool to champion the grievances of marginalised sections bereft of access to courts for protection of their fundamental rights.

It had adopted a lenient approach in testing locus standi of the person filing PILs, but that has become now a tool for anyone unconnected with an issue to file PILs in abuse of the strict locus standi provision. With the sea change in access to justice, the courts must insist on strict locus standi rule to prevent abuse of PILs, especially in matters relating to religion, customs, faith and beliefs.

Advocate Dhavan objects to order of arguments citing seniority

New Delhi: Maverick senior advocate **Rajeev Dhavan** Wednesday objected to the pecking order of arguments in faith vs fundamental rights tussle in SC and said that in the seniority sequence he should be arguing after SG Tushar Mehta, **reports Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

Having been slotted to argue after advocates C S Vaidyanathan and V Giri, Dhavan said if he is not given adequate weightage of seniority and time to make his submissions, which are in many ways opposite to that of the SG, "I may as well be asked to pack up and go home". Mehta, Vaidyanathan and Giri said Dhavan agreed Tuesday to argue after completion of their arguments. Dhavan denied any such agreement.

CJI Surya Kant said, "During lunch break, a person from media informed me that if the number of years of practice is taken as the criteria, Vaidyanathan and A M Singhvi will be senior to Dhavan. Hence, his turn to argue would come after submissions by Mehta, followed by Vaidyanathan & Singhvi."

Govt OKs bills to amend women's quota law, to table it in spl Parl session

Dipak Dash & Kumar Rakesh | TNN

Govt will table three bills in the special session starting April 16. The proposed changes will hike number of LS seats from 543 to 816, with 273 reserved for women

New Delhi: Govt on Wednesday cleared the draft bills for amendments to women's reservation law, paving the way for Parliament to take up the legislations for implementation of 33% reservation for them in Lok Sabha and state assemblies from 2029.

The draft bills, approved by the Cabinet, will be introduced in the special Parliament session starting April 16. **TOI** has learnt that three bills will be introduced — Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, Delimitation Bill and a separate legislation to extend reservation for women in UTs which have assemblies. The proposed changes will result in increase in the number of LS seats from the current 543 to 816, with 273 reserved for women. Reservation will also be done in a "vertical basis" with seats allocated for SCs and STs.

The provision for one-third reservation to women in LS and state assemblies was brought by passing the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in 2023. The law would have come into effect after the completion of the delimitation exercise on the basis of 2027 Census. Hence, it was expected to come into force in 2034, if the present law remained as it is.

People aware of the development said the redrawing of LS constituencies will be done on the basis of 2011 Census rather than the proposed 2027 Census. A similar exercise will be carried out for state assemblies, where seats will be reserved on a pro-rata basis.

While Constitution amendment bill will tweak Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, delimitation bill will lead to formation of a delimitation commission to redraw boundaries of LS and assembly constituencies. Once approved, the proposed laws will come into force after March 31, 2029, and will be implemented from 2029 LS polls and simultaneous polls in Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Andhra Pradesh.

HACK OF THE DAY — READ THE TRANSCRIPT BEFORE WATCHING THE WHOLE VIDEO

WHAT IT SOLVES: Helps you decide quickly whether a long YouTube video is worth your time and jump straight to the exact part you need

WHAT TO DO: Use YouTube's transcript view to scan the full text, search mentally for useful moments, and jump directly to them

STEPS:

1. **Open** the YouTube video in your browser
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3. **Click** "Show transcript" if the option appears
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5. **Jump** to that moment by clicking the matching transcript line

NOTE: This works only for videos that have captions. It is especially useful for lectures, interviews, tutorials, podcasts, and news explainers

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

HC quashes case against Ambani over ₹501 phone

Bhubaneswar: Orissa high court has quashed an attempt to revive a 23-year-old criminal suit against Reliance Industries Ltd and its chairman Mukesh Ambani over a defective mobile handset worth Rs 501 at the time, **reports Ashok Pradhan**. It fined the complainant Rs 1,000 for pursuing a case that had been dismissed thrice earlier & criticised lower court for issuing summons without adequate scrutiny.

FINES COMPLAINANT

HC noted the incongruity in lower court seeking to summon the RIL chairman over a handset sold by a dealer in Rourkela in 2003. "A sense of grievance, however deep, does not entitle a person to weaponise the criminal law against those who have already been found to bear no criminal liability," it said.

If this were to be the norm, "there would be nothing to prevent a passenger from summoning railway minister for a delayed train, or a consumer from prosecuting Union minister for food for a defective item supplied through a ration outlet".

RIL and Ambani had moved court against the summons issued on a complaint by Rourkela resident Prafulla Kumar Mishra.

In SC, Centre says true meaning of secularism is non-interference of state

▶ Continued from page 1

The additional dimension is because of the timing — it came ahead of assembly polls in Tamil Nadu. Mehta said that by upholding the TN law, which wrested control of appointment of 'archakas' and vested it in govt boards, SC allowed the state to intrude into religious matters of a denomination or sect maintaining their religious traditions in their temples.

"If such a law is given the imprimatur of SC, then even shankaracharya can be removed," he said. A nine-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said, "That does not mean 'archakas' would be above law and not held accountable for their misconduct."

Mehta responded by saying that so long as appointment of 'archakas' by the community temple wasn't violative of constitutional norms prohibiting caste-based discrimination, it is the community that should have the right to appoint persons as 'archakas', if they meet the eligibility criteria of knowledge in 'agamas' and rituals.

"True meaning of secularism is non-interference of state in religious matters of various denominations. Removal or appointment must adhere to qualification and experience that have evolved over centuries" he said.

Objecting to use of secularism and constitutional morality — both incongruent with issues related to religion, faith and belief — by courts to intervene in the name of reforms, Mehta said social and religious reforms should be left to the legislature. The bench prima facie agreed that SC must not be the harbinger of social reforms or reforms in religion which undermine the core belief and faith of devotees. "In the name of reforms, religion itself cannot be harmed," the bench said.

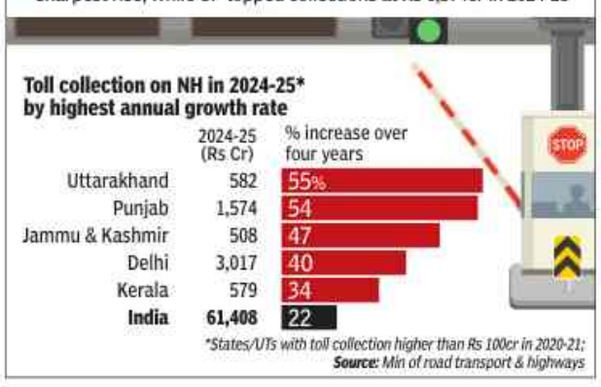
"What expertise do judges, who are scholars of law, have in religious matters to determine who constitutes a denomination? The shrines of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti and Nizamuddin Auliya and Shirdi Saibaba are visited by devotees belonging to all denominations, sects and religions. Can the court determine which shrine belongs to which faith?" Mehta pressed on.

The SG asked if the followers of Aurobindo consider themselves as a distinct religious group, can SC say they are not.

STATISTICS — A slice of life in numbers

Nat'l highway toll collections more than doubled over 4 years

Toll collections on national highways jumped nearly 120% from Rs 27,926cr in 2020-21 to Rs 61,408cr in 2024-25. Uttarakhand saw the sharpest rise, while UP topped collections at Rs 6,574cr in 2024-25



*States/UTs with toll collection higher than Rs 100cr in 2020-21; **Source:** Min of road transport & highways

INDIA'S N-DREAM CROSSES A MILESTONE

Reactor that makes more fuel than it burns has just come to life at Kalpakkam on India's southeastern coast, and it could help reshape the country's energy future

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Six decades after physicist Homi Bhabha sketched out an audacious three-stage nuclear roadmap for a newly independent India, the country has quietly crossed the threshold into Stage II. Not with fanfare, but with a controlled, self-sustaining reaction igniting inside a reactor on the Tamil Nadu coast.

On April 6, 2026, India's Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam attained criticality, the point at which a nuclear reactor sustains a continuous chain reaction on its own, a defining step in the country's civil nuclear journey.

What's "Criticality"?

Criticality marks the point at which a nuclear reactor achieves a self-sustaining chain reaction, a key milestone before full power generation, confirming that the reactor core is functioning exactly as designed. Think of it as the moment an engine first turns over under its own power after years on the drawing board.

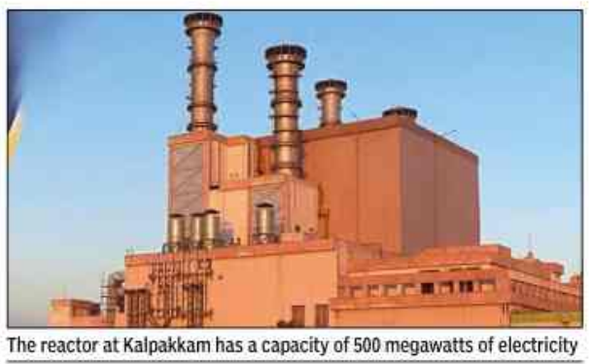
What Makes This Reactor Different?

Most nuclear plants in India — and around the world — run on uranium fuel, consume it, and stop. The PFBR produces more nuclear fuel than it burns. That is precisely what earns it the name "breeder" reactor. It has a capacity of 500 megawatts of electricity and uses liquid sodium as a coolant. It runs on a uranium-plutonium mixed oxide fuel loaded into the reactor core, surrounded by a blanket of uranium-238. The fission process reacts with this blanket and converts, or "transmutes", the uranium-238, producing more plutonium than the reactor consumes.

Designed by Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, built and operated by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited, the PFBR represents a key component of India's long-term nuclear strategy, with major contributions from over 200 Indian industries, including small and medium enterprises.

Why It Was Always About Thorium

To grasp why this moment matters, you need to understand the long game India has been playing since the 1960s. India adopted a three-stage nuclear fuel programme and has been pursuing it ever since. In the first stage, Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors fuelled by natural uranium generate electricity and produce plutonium as a by-product.



The reactor at Kalpakkam has a capacity of 500 megawatts of electricity

That plutonium is then used to make the mixed oxide fuel for a Fast Breeder Reactor in the second stage — the PFBR. This second stage also uses thorium to "breed" a fissile material called Uranium-233, which becomes the fuel for the third and final stage of reactors. The endgame has always been thorium. India possesses one of the world's largest thorium reserves, estimated at well over 8,00,000 tonnes, concentrated mostly in monazite sands of Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Thorium cannot be used directly as nuclear fuel, but the PFBR is the machine that begins converting it into something that can.

India imports much of its uranium; thorium is already sitting under Indian soil in vast quantities. The strategic logic writes itself.

Journey Plagued By Delays

Though construction was originally supposed to be completed by 2010, the project was delayed multiple times, and costs ballooned from an initial Rs 3,492 crore to more than double the initial estimate.

The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board granted permission for the "First Approach to Criticality" only after a thorough multi-tier safety review, regular inspections by a resident site observer team, and extensive evaluation of detailed safety submissions. Criticality was finally achieved on April 6, 2026.

What Comes Next?

Reaching criticality does not mean the lights in TN will brighten tomorrow. Once a sustained nuclear chain reaction is achieved, a series of low-power physics experiments will be conducted to further assess & understand reactor behaviour. After that, power levels will be raised gradually, with each step requiring regulatory sign-off. The next milestone will be connecting the reactor to the electrical grid to produce power on a commercial basis, pending the AERB's approval.

India's Place in History

Once successfully commercialised, India could become one of the few nations in the world to operate fast breeder reactors at a commercial scale, joining Russia as a leader in this niche but strategically key technology. Analysts are measured about what remains. Commercialising this tech at scale, reprocessing thorium-based spent fuel, and building out many more such reactors are all tasks that still lie ahead — likely spanning decades. But the machine is alive, the chain reaction is running, and a vision conceived in the early years of Indian independence has taken its most consequential step forward.

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Khera seeks bail from T'gana HC in Himanta case

Hyderabad: Pawan Khera, chairperson of AICC media and publicity department, has moved Telangana high court seeking anticipatory bail in a case registered by Guwahati police over his allegations against Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma. The petition is scheduled to come up for hearing before Justice K Sujana on Thursday, **reports Pinto Deepak**.

Khera was booked by Guwahati crime branch under various sections of BNS on charges including providing false information, forgery, cheating, criminal intimidation and criminal conspiracy. An Assam Police team visited his Delhi residence for questioning in connection with the case.

'You can't talk like this,' observer shoots back at CEC, removed

Election Official Was Asked To 'Go Home'

Cooch Behar South general observer Anurag Yadav drew criticism from CEC Kumar (left) during a meeting after failing to answer basic questions on polling booths in his constituency

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Kolkata: A high-level election review meeting on Wednesday became tense when a senior poll observer openly challenged Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, later leading to his removal.

DANCE of DEMOCRACY: PAGE 10

During the virtual meeting convened by the full bench of EC, Cooch Behar South general observer Anurag Yadav objected to remarks made by CEC Kumar. The situation escalated when Kumar told the officer to "go back home", said sources. Yadav reportedly shot back, saying, "You can't treat us like this. We have given 25 years to the service. You can't speak like this."

Yadav is a principal secretary-ranked officer with Uttar Pradesh govt.

Sources said the exchange led to a brief silence before discussions resumed on other issues. Yadav was removed as general observer by the EC immediately after the meeting. EC sources, however, said Yadav's removal was not based on his act of rebellion, but for "professional incompetence".

During the meeting, Yadav was asked basic questions regarding the number of polling booths in his constituency, and he reportedly failed to provide accurate details, drawing criticism from Kumar. "Observers are the eyes and ears of the commission. If an officer, after spending several days on the ground, cannot verify basic details like the number of polling stations, it raises serious questions about the integrity of the process," a senior EC official said.

Many bureaucrats also viewed Yadav's removal as a "stern warning" to other officials engaged in poll duties.

During the meeting, the issue of vulnerable booths in Cooch Behar was also discussed. Bengal CEO Manoj Agarwal suggested the possibility of imposing prohibitory orders in such areas.

'Outsider' influx ahead of Assam polls sparks vote-theft row

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PTI

Polling officials carrying EVMs and other materials, in Guwahati, Wednesday

Guwahati: Congress and All Assam Students' Union (Aasu) have flagged an influx of suspected "outsiders" into lower Assam districts ahead of Thursday's polling, pointing to droves of self-proclaimed voters arriving from UP, Bihar and Kerala by bus and train to vote across constituencies. The trend is pronounced in seats where the Muslim electorate has historically been the deciding factor, sources said.

In Barpeta district, Hindi-speaking voters getting off trains since Tuesday said they worked outside the state and had returned to vote. Barpeta Road railway station, the train hub of several Muslim-majority constituencies, has been busier than usual.

"People usually return in such large numbers every election. We are keeping vigil. We will take action if any complaint arrives," Barpeta SP Pushkin Jain said. Most Muslim families fear their citizenship may be questioned if they do not vote. "I have come from UP to vote in Mandia. I return ahead of each election because I belong to this land," a youth said.

Congress's Dispur candidate Mira Borthakur Goswami claimed on Wednesday that a voter from UP, identified as Dilraj Singh, came up to her and enquired if she needed his vote. Borthakur said the man showed her an IIT Guwahati identity card and offered to vote for her despite being from UP.

Own no land, house or car, total assets ₹15.4L: Didi

Kolkata: West Bengal chief minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee filed Wednesday her nomination for Bhowanipore after leading a 400m march from her residence with around 4,000 supporters, accompanied by four proposers from different religious communities.

Her poll affidavit shows Rs 75,700 cash in hand, 9.8 grams of gold jewellery worth Rs 1.45 lakh, and total assets of Rs 15.4 lakh. Annual income stands at Rs 23.2 lakh, drawn solely from book royalties and bank interest. Income has risen by Rs 8 lakh since 2021, with little change in overall assets.

Banerjee, a seven-time MP and four-time MLA, is eligible for salary and pension but has said she does not draw either. She owns no vehicle, land or house, carries no loans, and faces no criminal cases. She was last year listed as the country's poorest CM by Association for Democratic Reforms.

—**Tamaghna Banerjee**

TN gets new CS, DGP on EC orders; Stalin cries foul

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Ahead of the April 23 election for the 234-member Tamil Nadu assembly, the Election Commission of India (ECI) Wednesday replaced state's chief secretary N Muruganandam with senior bureaucrat M Sai Kumar and DGP (armed police, vigilance and anti-corruption) S Davidson Devasirvatham with Sandeep Mittal, a 1995-batch IPS officer, a decision that drew an angry reaction from CM **M K Stalin**.

The move follows multiple complaints from the opposition, alleging that the state's administrative machinery has been operating in favour of the DMK govt.

In a formal communication to the chief secretary, ECI secretary Lata Tripathi directed that M Sai Kumar, a 1990-batch IAS officer, be immediately posted as the state's top bureaucrat.

The ECI further mandated that the outgoing officers should not be assigned any election-related posts until the polling process is complete.

Emphasising the urgency of the directive, the commission ordered the changes to be implemented with immediate effect, requiring a compliance and joining report by 6pm on Wednesday.

The ECI directive made it clear that the transfers are part of the poll preparedness.

Meanwhile, CM Stalin attacked the poll panel, accusing it of acting like a "branch of BJP". He said DMK's victory cannot be stopped because of such moves. "Who are you trying to help by transferring the officials?" Stalin asked.

Cash-for-vote row rocks BJP in Palakkad

Palakkad: A political controversy erupted in Palakkad just hours before polling after Congress released a video on social media alleging that BJP workers distributed cash to influence voters in the constituency. Party workers alleged that NDA candidate Shobha Surendran and some BJP workers visited a house in Kannadi gram panchayat and gave money to an elderly voter on Wednesday morning.

As the video went viral, UDF and LDF attacked BJP, while Surendran denied the charge and alleged that Congress targeted her because she was leading the race in Palakkad.

Soon after the video surfaced, EC's flying squad and the district special branch reached Kannadi and took statements from those linked to the incident. TNN

BJP lodges complaints against Kharge & Didi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP on Wednesday lodged complaints with election commission against Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee for allegedly making "inflammatory statements" aimed at instigating violence.

Accusing Kharge of exploiting religious sentiments of Muslims for electoral advantage with his comparison of RSS and BJP to a "poisonous snake", BJP urged EC to censure him and his party for "violation" of criminal and electoral laws.

In its complaint against Banerjee, BJP sought filing of an FIR against her over her allegations at rallies that 200 vehicles bringing CRPF personnel were meant to attack people and that they were carrying money.

Kharge regrets 'illiterate' remark

Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday expressed regret over his controversial statement about the people of Gujarat, even as he said that his remarks were misinterpreted. "...It was never my intention to hurt the sentiments of the people of Gujarat for whom I have always had and will continue to have the highest of respect," he wrote on X. During a rally in Kerala, Kharge reportedly called the people of Gujarat "illiterate", as he argued they were being "fooled" by PM Modi. He added that neither Modi nor the Kerala chief minister could mislead the people of Kerala who are "very educated". TNN

After SIR, No. of voters in Mamata's Bhowanipore constituency down 25%

Dipawali.Mitra
@timesofindia.com

Banerjee files her nomination papers in Kolkata, Wednesday

Kolkata: Bhowanipore assembly constituency —the high-profile seat where Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee is pitted against BJP's Suvendu Adhikari — has seen its electorate shrink by nearly 25% following the SIR of the electoral roll. Of the total 51,004 deletions, 23.3% are Muslims and 76.7% are non-Muslims.

Before the SIR process, Bhowanipore had 2,06,295 voters. In the first phase, 44,787 names were removed under categories such as absent, shifted, deceased, duplicate, or unmapped. A second round saw another 2,342 deletions, while 18 new voters were added. Around 14,154 voters were placed under adjudication.

Sabar Institute researchers Ashin Chakraborty, Souptik Halder, and Sabir Ahamed said their analysis of 15 supplementary lists showed that 10,238 voters initially marked for adjudication were later reinstated, while 3,875 were deleted. "Among those deleted in the supplementary lists, nearly 40% are Muslims," Chakraborty said. Election Commission sources confirmed that around 3,500 names were deleted during adjudication. "Nearly 14,000 cases were marked for adjudication," an official said.

The institute's analysis also showed that 43.4% of non-Muslims were placed under adjudication. While 7.7% of Muslims were ultimately deleted from the final rolls, the figure for non-Muslims stood at 92.3%.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Priya D, R/o No. 15, Christ Calvary BLDG, GNR 2nd Cross, BDA RD, NR Diamond CLG, KR Puram, Bangalore - 560036, have changed my name from Priya D to Priya. Henceforth, I shall be known as Priya for all future purposes.

I, K KUMAR Residing at: #1-246, Eguva Ragimanupenta, Bangalupalem, Chittor, Andhra Pradesh-517429, have changed my minor daughter's name from K NIKITHA SRI to KAMMA NIKITHA SRI for all purposes vide Affidavit Dated: 25/11/2025, sworn before Notary V Rangaraju, Bangalore

I, Sahana Ravi Shankar, W/o Ravi Shankar L, residing at 1886, 15th cross, Prashant Nagar, T Dasarahalli, Bangalore -560057, have changed my name to K R Sahana and shall hereafter be known as K R Sahana for all purposes. Affidavit no:IN-KA27065066345934Y

I, Pradeep Kumar M S/O Mariswamy C S R/O Nanjangudu Talluku Biligere Hobli, VTC: Chinnamballi, Dist. Mysore (Karnataka) - 571119 have changed the name of my minor daughter Poorvika C P aged 6 years and she shall hereafter be known as SAMRUDDHI C P.

I, MONICA V L, W/o. Ratash Kartikh, hereby declare that I am using the name MONICA RATASH after my marriage, and both names MONICA V L and MONICA RATASH refer to one and the same person. Declared before Notary Public Advocate Mohammed Hussain.K

I, Facy Jose residing at No 12, Ivory Manor, Prakruthi Layout, Babusahibpalaya, Bangalore-560043 has changed my father name mentioned in my Passport No. L3565205 to JOSEPH ABRAHAM via affidavit dated 7th April, 2026 for all future purposes

I, Ricky Jones(Old Name), s/o of R. Suresh residing at No.62, 7 cross, 2nd main, Murthy layout, Nava Jothi road, Gedalahalli Bengaluru-560077, Karnataka, India, changed my name from Ricky Jones to S.Ricky Jones vide affidavit dated 08/04/2026 sworn in before Notary, Uday Kumar .K. Henceforth, I shall be known as S. Ricky Jones for all purposes.

I, Rachur Venata Vijayaditya, have changed my name to Rachur Venkata Vijayaditya vide affidavit dated 30-03-2026. Henceforth, I shall be known as Rachur Venkata Vijayaditya for all purposes.

I, Andrew Wellesley Stephen, residing at No 130, GPR Layout, Old Chandapura, Chandapura, Bengaluru 560099, have changed my name to Andrew Jude W and will hereafter be know as Andrew Jude W.

I Syeda Mariam Zakir have changed my Name Syeda Maryam Zakir,vide affidavit date 07.04.2026,Notary Kanikha Raja,Blr-15

LOST & FOUND

I, MRUDULA LOKESH REDDY W/o. LOKESH N. Reddy Residing at No-1777, 15th Main Road, 5th Block, HBR Lay out, Bangalore-560043 have Lost my Original Sale Deed No-78 1996 1997 and BNS-1-02805-2012-2013 and BNS-1-02799 – 2012-2013 A-Complaint has been lodged at Hennur police Station Bangalore of found please Contact 9845126536

NOVENA PRAYERS

THANK you Saint Expedite Saint Jude Thaddeus and all the Gods godesses and Archangels for fulfilling my wishes as promised I'm spreading your name

THANKSGIVING

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You didn't just visit Europe this March... you brought India back to Europe. And even today... across Europe, we see your groups everywhere - that familiar yellow T-shirt, moving confidently from one destination to another, every single day.

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Europe - Western, Eastern, Northern, Mediterranean

Tour Name	Ex-Mumbai	J&L
Swiss Paris Austria Germany(6D)	175K-200K	110K-135K
London Paris Swiss Italy(9D)	295K-306K	215K-226K
European Splendours (10D)	280K-296K	215K-231K
European Delight (13D)	386K-400K	306K-320K
European Wonders (13D)	340-365K	275-300K
European Jewels (15D)	410K-425K	330K-345K
Multi-Country Europe (17D-27D)	465K-695K	385K-615K
Swiss Paris London (11D)	375K-390K	295K-310K
Swiss Austria/Italy(8D/11D)	275K-335K	205K-265K
Swiss Paris (8D)	285-300K	210K-225K
England Scotland Ireland Wales (10D/15D)	315K-440K	245K-370K
Switzerland (7D/10D)	275K-360K	210K-290K
Italy (8D/15D)	295K-465K	230K-395K
Vienna Prague Budapest (8D)	250K-275K	175K-200K
Croatia Slovenia Slovakia Hungary (12D)	330K-345K	255K-270K
Central & Eastern Europe (17D)	400K-425K	325K-350K

Tour Name	Ex-Mumbai	J&L
Scandinavia (10D/15D)	335K-475K	250K-385K
Scandinavia Midnight Sun (16D)	535K-555K	455K-475K
Scandinavia Iceland Midnight Sun (14D)	625K-650K	545K-570K
Scandinavia Iceland (15D)	565K-590K	475K-500K
Scandinavia Russia (17D)	435K-460K	365K-390K
Best of Greenland (9D) Aug 31	675K-700K	585K-610K
Best of Russia (7D)	175K-200K	115K-140K
Spain (10D/11D/17D)	265K-400K	195K-330K
Spain Portugal (13D)	335K-360K	260K-285K
Spain Portugal Morocco (16D)	375K-400K	295K-320K
Greece (5D/7D/9D/14D)	180K-425K	115K-360K
Best of Egypt (9D)	175K-200K	115K-140K
Egypt Greece Turkey (15D)	425K-450K	--
Tunisia Malta Sicily (10D)	375K-400K	295K-320K
Georgia Armenia (8D)	175K-200K	125K-150K
Uzbekistan Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan (9D)	215K-230K	160K-175K

South East Asia Far East Asia

Tour Name	Ex-Mumbai	J&L
Singapore Thailand Malaysia(10D)	172K-180K	132K-140K
Singapore Malaysia/Bali (8D)	145K-190K	115K-125K
Singapore Thailand (8D)	152K-158K	--
Best of Singapore (5D)	129K-135K	106K-111K
Hong Kong Macao Shenzhen (7D)	190K-200K	137K-147K
Thailand (4D/6D/8D/15D)	50K-175K	30K-65K
Vietnam (5D/8D/13D)	200K-205K	--
Vietnam Da Nang Phu Quoc (11D)	209K-219K	--
Vietnam Cambodia (11D)	195K-205K	--
Phuket Krabi (4D)	57K-62K	40K-45K
Kuala Lumpur Malaysia (4D)	60K-65K	29K-39K
Japan (5D/7D/11D)	190K-390K	135K-320K
Japan Explorer (10D) June 4	350K-360K	288K-298K
Japan Korea (10D)	350K-375K	295K-320K
China Korea (10D)	300K-310K	235K-245K
Best of China (9D)	175K-225K	120K-170K

America Africa Australia NZ

Tour Name	Ex-Mumbai	J&L
Australia (7D/9D/15D)	225K-515K	150K-440K
New Zealand (10D/15D)	375K-495K	285K-405K
Australia New Zealand (11D/17D)	385K-575K	270K-495K
South Africa (9D/13D)	240K-360K	190K-310K
South Africa Kenya Victoria Falls (15D)	455K-480K	--
Best of Mauritius (6D)	125K-135K	85K-95K
Uganda Rwanda (8D)	525000	--
USA East & West Coast with Chicago & National Parks (22D)	800K-825K	675K-700K
America (13D/15D/19D)	535K-770K	410K-645K
USA California Carnival with Death Valley & Yosemite (10D)	432K-452K	300K-325K
USA East Coast/Chicago (7D/9D)	280K-330K	175K-230K
USA West Coast (7D)	--	225K-250K
Canada Alaska (18D)	855K-875K	655K-675K
Hawaii Mexico (11D)	950000	675000
Antarctica (13D) Nov 28	1335000	1135000
South America (21D) Sept 26	1350000	1075000

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Sri Lanka (7D to 15D)

Bhutan/Nepal (9D/8D)
Kashmir (6D)
Leh Ladakh (7D to 15D)
Sikkim Darjeeling (4 to 9D)
Assam Meghalaya/ Arunachal (7D/12D)
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Protesters in Imphal defy curfew, demand resignation of CM

Imphal: Protests demanding resignation of Manipur CM **Yumnam Khemchand Singh** and home minister Konthoujam Govindas escalated in Imphal East on Wednesday, deepening the political crisis triggered by five deaths since the previous day — two sleeping children killed in a bomb attack on their home and three civilians fatally wounded in firing by CRPF. Meitei pressure group COCOMI led the agitation in Wangkhei, accusing govt of moral failure. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowd, which had assembled amid a curfew. While prohibitory orders remain in force, the govt lifted the suspension of broadband internet services in five districts.

The unrest began Tuesday morning after an explosion in which Oinam Tomthin (5) and five-month-old Oinam Yaisana — children of a BSF head constable posted in Bihar — were killed in their bedroom. Their mother, a nurse in Guwahati, was wounded in the attack by unidentified assailants.

Hours later, CRPF personnel retaliated against a mob that allegedly attempted to storm their camp at Gelmol, a few hundred metres from the blast site at Tronglaobi. Two protesters died in the firing and a third, succumbed to injuries in hospital on Wednesday.

Khemchand chaired a meeting of the unified command overseeing security, involving the Army, Assam Rifles, CRPF, BSF, ITBP and SSB. "The state govt remains committed to safeguarding lives and upholding law and order," he said. TNN

India withdraws offer to host COP33 in 2028

UN Climate Group To Bank On South Korea

Vishwa.Mohan
@timesofindia.com

India is aiming to reduce its emissions intensity by 47% by 2035 from 2005 levels

New Delhi: India has withdrawn its offer to host the 33rd session of the UN climate conference (COP33) in 2028, communicating its inability to host the event "following a review of its commitments for the year 2028".

However, India has not formally announced its decision so far. The decision was communicated last week by the ministry's joint secretary Rajat Agarwal to the chair of the UN climate body's Asia-Pacific Group, which is responsible for coordinating with host countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

India's proposal to host COP33 was first made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself on Dec 1, 2023, during his speech at COP28 in Dubai. The announcement came in the wake of India's successfully hosting the G20 summit in 2023.

The country's decision comes merely a week after it enhanced its climate action target under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement by declaring the country's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the period 2031 to 2035 a part of its long-term goal of achieving net-zero by 2070.

India's latest NDC has three quantitative goals: reducing emissions intensity (emission per unit of GDP) by 47% by 2035 (from 2005 level); achieving 60% cumulative installed capacity of electric power from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2035; and creating carbon sink of 3.5 to 4 billion tonnes of CO_2 equivalent through forest and tree cover by 2035.

With India withdrawing its candidacy, the Asia-Pacific Group may now bank on South Korea, which had earlier expressed interest in hosting the UN climate summit in 2028. Turkiye will host COP31 later this year, while Ethiopia will be hosting COP32 next year.

Sand mafia mows down forest guard in MP's Morena

Bhopal: A forest guard was crushed to death by a tractor-trolley ferrying illegally mined sand when he tried to stop it during a patrol in Morena on Wednesday morning. The incident took place around 6am in the Chambal sanctuary area, where an IPS officer, Narendra Kumar, was similarly run over by a tractor in 2012.

According to police, a six-member forest department team from Ambah range had left for routine patrolling around 5.30am. The team spotted a tractor-trolley loaded with sand approaching from the opposite direction. When signalled to stop, the driver, Vinod Kori, allegedly tried to flee. As forest guard Harkesh Gurjar, 33, stepped forward to intercept the vehicle, he was run over.

Police have booked three accused – driver Vinod Kori and tractor owners Sonu Chauhan and Pawan Tomar. TNN

J&K LG terminates services of 2 govt employees for ties with terror outfits

Bharti Jain & Sanjay Khajuria | TNN

New Delhi/Jammu: Continuing the crackdown on terror operatives entrenched in the govt, J&K Lt Governor **Manoj Singh** Wednesday ordered termination of two Class-IV employees of the UT administration over alleged links with terror outfits Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

One of the sacked staffers, Farhat Ali Khanday, was working in the education department in Ramban, but, in reality, this was a cover he used to build a larger terrorist network for HM in the district, an official said. Mohammad Shafi Dar from Bandipora was employed in the rural development department, and investigation has revealed he was providing logistical and operational support to LeT terrorists, according to the official.

In April last year, Shafi and his associate Rayees Ahmad Dar were apprehended at a checkpost and an AK-56 rifle, a grenade and ammunition were recovered from Shafi. Investigation has revealed Shafi had evolved from a mere facilitator into an active operational terror associate and his network was plotting an attack on security forces, the official said.

The services of as many as 90 J&K govt employees have been terminated under Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution over terror links by the administration led by Sinha, who recently said he will not rest till "the last thread of the terror cancer is torn from the body of gove machinery".

Farhat, as per sources, came under the scanner when a hawala network, tasked with distributing money to families of seven slain terrorists, was busted in April 2011.

HC nixes scam accused's plea for release

New Delhi: The Delhi high court on Wednesday dismissed a petition by alleged middleman Christian Michel James in the Rs 3,600-crore Agusta Westland VVIP helicopter scam case seeking release from jail.

A bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Ravinder Dudeja said there was no merit in the petition by the British national, who was extradited from Dubai in Dec 2018. James had contended that an extradited person can be prosecuted only for the offences for which extradition took place, and not for connected offences. TNN

Together, let us empower our Nari Shakti!

By Narendra Modi

To describe the women's reservation bill as a legislative exercise is an understatement, it reflects the aspirations of crores, says the PM

In the coming days, India will be immersed in a festive season, with celebrations taking place across the length and breadth of the nation. The people of Assam will mark Rongali Bihu while Odisha will celebrate Maha Bishuba Pana Sankranti. In West Bengal, Poila Boishakh will usher in the Bengali New Year and in Kerala, Vishu will be observed with immense enthusiasm. In Tamil Nadu, Puthandu will be celebrated while in Punjab and other parts of northern India, it will be Baisakhi, which will usher in a spirit of hope as well as positivity. I convey my best wishes to all those across India and the world who are marking these festivals. May these auspicious occasions bring happiness and prosperity to everyone's lives.

Furthermore, on April 11, we will commence the 200th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Phule, and on April 14, India will pay homage to Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar on Ambedkar Jayanti.

In addition to these special occasions, when the spirit of renewal fills our hearts and minds, our nation stands at the threshold of another historic occasion. It is an opportunity to deepen the foundations of our democracy and to reaffirm our collective commitment to equality and inclusion.

On April 16, Parliament will be convened to discuss and pass an important bill that advances women's reservation. To describe this merely as a legislative exercise would be an understatement. It is a reflection of the aspirations of crores of women across India. It is an affirmation of a principle that has long guided our civilisational ethos, that society progresses when women progress.

Women constitute nearly half of India's population. Their contributions to our nation are vast and invaluable. Today, India is witnessing remarkable achievements by women across every field. From science and technology to entrepreneurship, from sports to the armed forces and from music to the arts, women are at the forefront of India's progress. Over the years, sustained efforts have been made to create an enabling environment for women's empowerment. Greater access to education, improved healthcare, enhanced financial inclusion and better access to basic amenities have strengthened the foundations of women's participation in economic and social life.

Yet, their representation in the world of politics and legislative bodies has not always been commensurate with their role in society. This is particularly unfortunate because when women participate in administration and decision-making, they bring with them experiences and insights that enrich public discourse and improve the quality of governance.

It is imperative that the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and the assembly elections to various states in the coming times are conducted with women's reservation in place. Over the decades, there have been repeated efforts to provide women with their rightful place in democratic institutions by the previous governments. Committees were made, bill drafts were introduced, but they never saw the light of day. But the broad consensus has remained that women's representation in legislative bodies has to increase. In Sept 2023, Parliament passed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam with the same spirit of consensus. I consider it to be among the most special occasions of my life.

This opportunity to ensure women's reservation also resonates deeply with the spirit of our Constitution. The makers of our Constitution envisioned a society where equality is both enshrined and realised in practice. Strengthening women's participation in legislative institutions is an important step towards fulfilling that vision. It reflects our commitment to building a society where every citizen has an equal stake in shaping the nation's destiny.

This is a moment that cannot be deferred any longer. Every delay in advancing women's representation is, in effect, a delay in strengthening the quality and inclusiveness of our democracy. For decades, the need for greater participation of women in legislative institutions has been acknowledged, discussed and reaffirmed. To postpone action now would mean extending an imbalance that we already recognise and have the capacity to correct. At a time when India is moving forward with confidence and purpose, it is essential that our institutions reflect the aspirations of all citizens, especially those who form half our population. Timely action will not only honour long-standing commitments but also ensure that the momentum of progress is sustained. This is truly a historic opportunity to make our democracy more representative, responsive and future-ready.

This moment calls for collective action. It is not about any one govt, party or individual. It is about the nation as a whole recognising the importance of this step and coming together to realise it. It is what we owe to our Nari Shakti. That is why the passage of a bill for women's reservation should reflect the broadest possible consensus and be guided by the larger national interest. Such opportunities call upon us to act not for ourselves, but for future generations. They remind us that the true strength of a democracy lies in its ability to evolve and to become more inclusive over time.

As we approach this historic Parliament sitting, I appeal to all Members of Parliament, across party lines, to come together in support of this important step for the women of India. Let us seize this opportunity with a sense of responsibility and purpose. Let us act in a manner that reflects the highest traditions of our democracy.

India has always shown that when it comes to matters of national importance, it can rise above differences and act with unity. This is one such moment. Let us move forward together and strengthen constitutional values and empower our Nari Shakti for national progress.

(The writer is PM of India)

'315 launches placed 4.6k objects in space in 2025'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Global space activity surged in 2025 with 315 successful launches and 4,651 objects placed in orbit, even as 1,911 re-entered the atmosphere, marking a net annual growth of 74.5% in space objects, as per the Indian Space Situational Assessment Report (ISSAR) released here on Wednesday.

The data points to increasing congestion in Earth's orbits, alongside a rise in collision risks and the necessity of tighter space traffic management. A brief findings of the report prepared by Isro Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (Istrac) were presented at Spacecraft Mission Operations (SMOPs). On the domestic front, India launched eight satellites and placed four rocket bodies in orbit through four missions. A total of 12 Indian objects re-entered the atmosphere during the year. The report states that India currently has 86 satellites, including those that have become defunct or have decayed, in orbit. There are 27 operational satellites in low Earth orbit and 32 in geosynchronous orbit.

'Real Work Starts After Launch'

V Narayanan, chairman of Isro, said mission operations that keep satellites alive for years — will define the next phase of the country's space ambitions. He said while launches last barely 15 to 25 minutes, spacecraft must function reliably for years, sometimes up to 15. "Ensuring the spacecraft remains fully operational in orbit... continuous monitoring, simulations, and command operations. This is a very important domain," he said.

Jawan dies after tree falls on him

Jamshedpur: A CRPF CoBRA jawan suffered fatal head injuries after a tree fell on a tent where he was sleeping at a camp in Saranda forest in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district on Wednesday. TNN

Thief who hid underwater for 5hrs, breathed through lotus stem, arrested by RPF

P Naveen & Siddharth Pandey | TNN

Bhopal/Jabalpur: An interstate thief hid underwater for nearly five hours, using a lotus stem to breathe, before RPF personnel arrested him earlier this week. Harvinder Singh, 32, from Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor, was one of the most wanted criminals on the radar of Indian Railways, with officials suspecting his involvement in more than 500 train thefts over the past decade across several states.

RPF officials identified Singh after matching his photo with an old Mumbai Mirror report dated Aug 7, 2018, and verifying details through ICJS records. "We are now getting calls from multiple states inquiring about him. Chennai authorities shared some video footage of him, and we are examining it as part," IG (RPF) Rajeev Kumar Yadav said.

The operation leading to Singh's his arrest was launched early April 6 at Sihora railway station under Jabalpur division. Around 4.50am, RPF personnel noticed a man deboarding a train from the offside and attempting to leave the station premises hurriedly.

RPF staff chased the suspect. Realising he was being followed, the accused ran towards the nearby local market area and jumped into a moss-covered pond located close to the station. Within seconds, he disappeared beneath the surface. For the next several hours, he remained hidden underwater. Police said he used a hollow lotus stem to draw air intermittently, allowing him to stay submerged and avoid detection. Local police were informed, and divers were called to the spot. After sustained search efforts, the accused was located and pulled out of the pond.

Dhobi gets notice over ₹598cr 'diamond' deals

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ajmer: The income tax department has issued notices to a roadside washerman in Ajmer, seeking an explanation for bank transactions worth over ₹598 crore that the notice links to large-scale diamond buying and selling. Jitendra Kumar, who earns a living washing and ironing clothes in Ajmer's Ramganj, said the bank account mentioned in the notice sent recently isn't his.

The department also issued a notice to the manager of the private bank where the account is said to be held.

Kumar said he lost his PAN card two years ago in Pali while attending a function.

His advocate, Rakesh Thada, said they have filed an FIR against the bank and the person operating the account, alleging it is being run by "some businessman of Pali" for a Surat-based diamond firm.

"For the past few days, I have been making rounds of police station and lawyers. I am perturbed and unable to work," an anguished Jitendra told reporters. Police said they are looking into the complaint.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/180/2026
Dated : 30-03-2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Consultancy services for Detailed master planning, urban designing, engineering & preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Yelahanka Mega Coaching Terminal - Augmentation of Coaching maintenance and Platform Facilities at Rail Wheel Factory, Yelahanka, Bengaluru **(Tender Ref. No. TECH-CONSULTANTS)**	Rs. 4,10,00,000/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs on 22-05-2026**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/ Works/Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/16/AAS/PRB/SWR/2026-27
Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform ticktes, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

Government of Karnataka
Agriculture Department
OFFICE OF THE JOINT DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE
Center of Excellence Building, Behind National College, Vidya Nagar, HosapeteHarihar Road, Vijayanagara District-583203.Phone No.: 08394-200240
E-mail ID:jdavijayanagar@gmail.com
No. JDA.VNR/EST/08/2026-27 Date : 07.04.2026
Tender Advertisement
As per Joint Director of Agriculture and related sub Offices Tender for the year 2026-27 has called for **RSK (SMA)** n two cover both (Technical & Financial) mode in the prescribed format for taking **RSK Accountant** outsource persons through Manpower Agencies, last date for participating is 15.04.2026 up to 4:00 pm obtained through the website https://KPPP.Karnataka.gov.in, Further details can be obtained from the said office during office hours
Tender No: AD/2026-27/SE0489
Sd/- Joint Director of Agriculture,Vijayanagara.
DIPR/Vijayanagar/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/16

MAHARASHTRA ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (MEDA)
(A Government of Maharashtra Institute)
Aundh Road, Opposite Spicer College, Near Commissionerate of Animal Husbandry, Aundh, Pune - 411 007
Tel. No.: 020-35000450 | E-mail id : gmsolar@mahaurja.com | Website: www.mahaurja.com
NOTICE FOR TENDER
Maharashtra Energy Development Agency (MEDA) invites Tender for work, supply, installation, testing, commissioning, and comprehensive maintenance (CMC) for a period of 7 years of Micro Grid projects in 16 villages located in Dharni and Chikhaldara talukas of the Melghat region, Amravati district.
For detailed Tender Document, interested bidders should visit website www.mahatenders.gov.in. Tender submission would be online from 09-04-2026@ 11.00 am to 04-05-2026 @3.00 pm. Director General, MEDA reserves the right to accept or reject anyone or all the Tender without giving reasons thereof.
Director General , MEDA

Bennett & Coleman
THE TIMES OF INDIA
TOI

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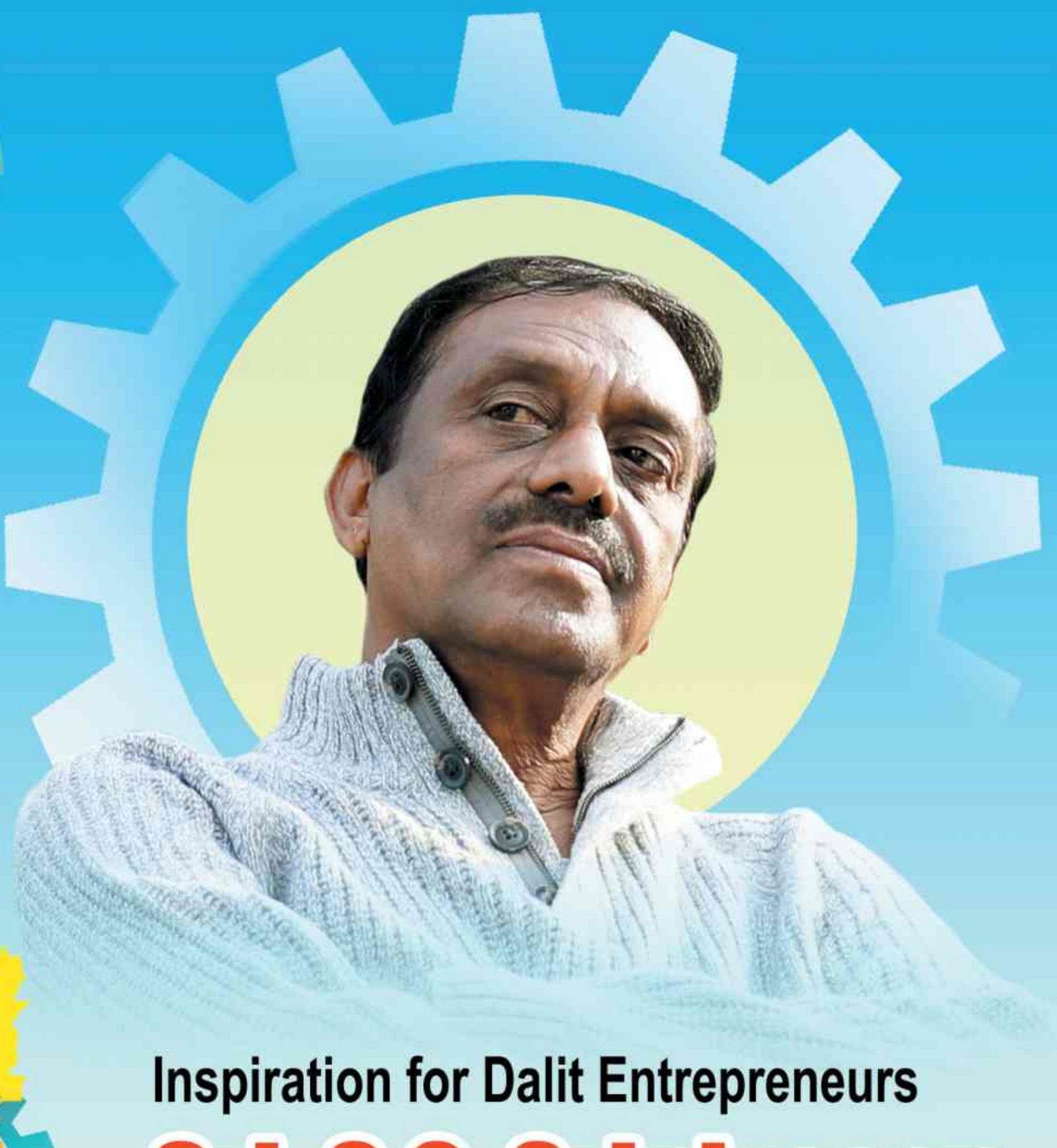
25001/12/2627
By E_Mail/e-Despatch
E_Mail ID: serwcbaripada@gmail.com
Ph-No-06792-261343/261344
Gangraj, Baripada
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BARIPADA
Office Order No 2255 / Dt. 08.04.2026 //
1st Corrigendum to National Competitive Bidding e_procurement Notice No.1724/Bridge works Dt.10.03.2026 (NCB No-407).
Due to unavoidable circumstances the important dates of tendering process for bridge work annexure **Sl No-3 "Construction of H.L Bridge over Handibhanga Nallah at 2nd Km on RD Road to Handibhanga Road under SBY in the District of Mayurbhanj for the year 2025-26."** is being changed as follows.

Sl No	Item	Time Schedule as per Original NCB	Time Schedule as per Corrigendum Notice
1	Availability of tender On-line for bidding	25.03.2026 at 11.00 A.M to 08.04.2026 up to 05.00 P.M	20.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M to 04.05.2026 up to 05.00 P.M
2	Last Date & Time of Seeking Tender Clarification if any	07.04.2026 up to 05.00 P.M	02.05.2026 up to 05.00 P.M
3	Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bid	09.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M	05.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M
4	Date & Time of Opening of Financial Bid	Will be intimated later	Will be intimated later

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.
Sd/- **Er. A.K Naik**
Chief Construction Engineer
R.W. CIRCLE, BARIPADA
OIPR-25001/25130/1/26-27/0002

28001/4/2627
INSTITUTE OF MATHEMATICS AND APPLICATIONS
(Science and Technology Department, Govt. of Odisha)
Andharua, Bhubaneswar-751029
Letter No. IMA/42-Admission/397/2026 Date: 08.04.2026
ADMISSION NOTICE FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-27
Institute of Mathematics and Applications (IMA) is a premier institute well known for its unique teaching, learning, research and training activities. The vision of IMA is to generate, disseminate, and preserve knowledge in mathematical science and related disciplines and to use this knowledge for promoting welfare of the people. The aim of the institute is to strive for excellence and spread the culture of mathematical competence at all levels of the society. IMA conducts its own entrance test for intake of students in the following courses offered by the institute. Scholarships may be awarded to some of the meritorious students of U.G. & P.G. courses.
1. **Undergraduate Course (Four years duration):**
   - **B.Sc. (Hons.) in Mathematics and Computing, Intake: 45 (Forty five)**
   Eligibility: A candidate seeking admission to this programme should have passed Higher Secondary Examination or equivalent examination with Mathematics and English as subjects.
2. **Postgraduate Course (Two years duration):**
   - **M.A./M.Sc. in Mathematics with Data Science, Intake: 30 (Thirty)**
   Eligibility: A candidate seeking admission to this programme should have passed Bachelor's Degree with Mathematics/Statistics as honours/pass subject.
3. **Integrated Postgraduate Courses (Five years duration):**
   - **M.Sc. in Mathematics and Computing, Intake: 30 (Thirty)**
   - **M.Sc. in Mathematics and Artificial Intelligence, Intake: 30 (Thirty)**
   Eligibility: As mentioned in the course B.Sc. (Hons.) in Mathematics and Computing.
The Information Brochure consisting procedure of application, fees, centers of entrance test etc. is available in the IMA website link **https://www.iomaorissa.ac.in**
Important Dates
Date of availability of application forms and Information Brochure : 09/04/2026
Last date of receipt of completed application form : 30/05/2026
Date of Entrance Test : 23/06/2026
REGISTRAR
OIPR-28001/28010/1/26-27/0001



Inspiration for Dalit Entrepreneurs

Sri. C.G. Srinivasan

Felicitation Ceremony

Date: 09-04-2026, Thursday @11am
Venue : Dr. Ambedkar Bhavana, Vasantanagara, Bengaluru

A felicitation program has been organized to honor the lifetime achievements of Shri C.G. Srinivasan, who has made significant contributions to social service, industrial development, and the promotion of Dalit entrepreneurs.

For the past 17 years, Shri C.G. Srinivasan, through his continuous efforts under the guidance of Dr. L. Hanumantaiah through Karnataka Dalit Entrepreneurs Association(KDEA), has worked towards realizing the vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for achieving economic self-reliance among Dalit communities.

With the support of all the Government in the state of Karnataka, he has been instrumental in formulating the following schemes for the economic upliftment of Dalits:

Industrial Land / Industrial Shed upfront Subsidy up to 75%.
Interest Subsidy Loan scheme at 4% upto 10 crores
4% interest subsidy scheme for certain commercial/business/Services and Hospitality activities up to Rs 1 crore.
Textile-Related Industry Subsidy at 75% subsidy up to Rs. 2 crore.
Karnataka State Collateral Security Support upto Rs 2 crores.
Soft Seed Capital – Interest-Free Loan up to Rs. 75 lakh
Capital Investment Subsidy up to Rs. 225 lakh.
Exemption of Stamp Duty up to 100% & Concessional Registration Charges
50% Power Subsidy for Textile Units Using 20 HP to 200 HP.
Power Subsidy at Rs 2 per unit for the first 5 years.
Exemption on Tax on Electricity Tariff.
Full Reimbursement of Loan processing fee, legal fee, loan disbursement fee.

ಎಲ್ಲರೂ ಅಪಾರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮವನ್ನು ಯಶಸ್ವಿಗೊಳಿಸಬೇಕೆಂದು ವಿನಂತಿ

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Kerala, Assam, Puducherry are set to vote in what are essentially straight, two-way contests as 2026 assembly polls kick off today

Round 1: Bipolar Fights, Polls Apart

Full Marx or King Cong? Why the Kerala contest is a battle of brands

Rajiv.G@timesofindia.com

As Kerala goes to vote in a taut battle of nerves between the incumbent Left Democratic Front (LDF), and the United Democratic Front (UDF), with NDA looking to gain some ground, its build-up — in the last bastion of the Left — was marked by unprecedented, high-voltage, no-holds-barred public relations (PR) branding campaigns that saturated television, FM radio, digital platforms and outdoor advertising spaces.

Slogans such as "Who else but LDF?", "Kerala will win, UDF will lead", and "What never changed will now change with NDA" have dominated campaigns, in a not-so-subtle shift — from traditional grassroots mobilisation to narrative-driven electoral politics.

For the first time, Kerala witnessed an intense "video war" among parties. From giant billboards to LED displays and targeted social media outreach, LDF, UDF, and the BJP-led NDA mounted aggressive, multi-platform campaigns.

A defining feature of this election has been the strong personalisation of campaigns around leadership. LDF anchored its messaging around chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, projecting him as the face of governance continuity through the "Who Else..." campaign. The release of a detailed performance report, highlighting near-complete implementation of manifesto promises, reinforced a narrative centred on governance and delivery.

Congress-led UDF countered with a high-decibel campaign, targeting what it described as centralised and personality-driven governance. Its strategy combined traditional outreach, including statewide yatras, with innovative PR tactics and attention-grabbing campaign messaging.

BJP, meanwhile, focused on aggressive brand-building — projecting a development agenda, placing significant emphasis on digital campaigns and targeted advertisements as part of its long-term strategy to expand its footprint in the state.

Beyond campaign style, the election has taken on broader national significance. It is widely being seen as a test of governance models, opposition cohesion, and the evolving balance between ideology and welfare-centric politics.

Kerala's electoral history has typically been defined by alternating LDF and UDF govts. However, LDF's consecutive victory in 2021 under Vijayan disrupted that pattern, making the 2026 contest a test of whether traditional anti-incumbency sentiment remains intact. A defeat for LDF would also diminish the presence of CPM in its last major stronghold.

The campaign narrative has also undergone notable shifts. Early phases were dominated by issues such as corruption allegations, economic concerns, backdoor appointments, the Sabarimala gold heist controversy, and rehabilitation concerns of Wayanad landslide victims, alongside scandals involving opposition leaders. However, as campaigning intensified, these issues gave way to sharper political attacks, including allegations of covert alliances, communal polarisation debates, and direct exchanges between senior leaders.

LDF has framed the election as a referendum on the "Pinarayi model", highlighting welfare expansion, infrastructure development, and administrative centralisation. It has also promised an expanded welfare agenda if voted back to governance.

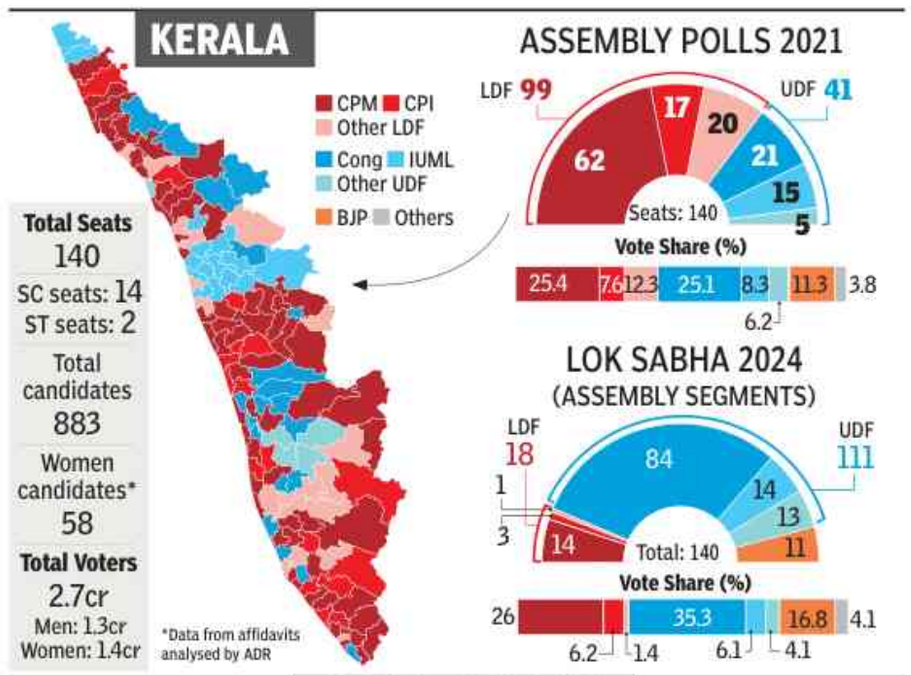
UDF, on the other hand, has advanced a counter-narrative of "welfare with accountability", questioning the efficiency, transparency, and fiscal sustainability of the govt's programmes while banking on voter fatigue and economic concerns.

For Congress, the stakes are particularly high, with another term in opposition potentially weakening its organisational base in the state. BJP, while not seen as an immediate contender for governance, is focused on incremental gains that could signal ideological inroads into a traditionally Left-dominated polity.

The outcome of the Kerala election is expected to carry implications beyond the state. If LDF forms govt, it would validate governance-driven incumbency and reinforce the role of strong leadership and welfare delivery in overcoming anti-incumbency. If UDF comes back, it would reaffirm the resilience of anti-incumbency and the relevance of opposition coalitions. And, if NDA gains ground, it would indicate gradual ideological diversification and support BJP's expansion strategy in southern India.

PTI

Poll officials leave for their booths on Wednesday, the eve of the Kerala elections



HOT SEATS

Ambalapuzha

H Salam, CPM

G Sudhakaran, Ind

Ambalapuzha, in southern Kerala, has emerged as one of the most politically symbolic contests in this election. G Sudhakaran's decision to end his six-decade-long association with CPM and fight as an Independent has led to a dramatic realignment. His contest against sitting CPM MLA, H Salam, has been complicated by UDF's move to stay out of the race and openly back Sudhakaran. A victory for Sudhakaran would not only be historic but could also signal deeper cracks within LDF.

Past winners: **2021, 2016, 2011 (CPM)**

Peravoor

Sunny Joseph, Cong

K K Shylaja, CPM

Peravoor represents a prestige battle. Former health minister Shylaja — once seen as a possible CM face — has been fielded by CPM, despite her reluctance to shift from her stronghold, Mattannur, which she had been representing since 2016. She faces Joseph, the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president, who has held the seat since 2011. For Shylaja, the contest is both a return and a test: she had won Peravoor in 2006, but the seat has since remained with Joseph, who is now seeking to defend it for a fourth straight term.

Past winners: **2021, 2016, 2011 (Cong)**

Nemom

K S Sabarinathan, Cong

V Sivankutty, CPM

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, BJP

The BJP made history here in 2016, when O Rajagopal defeated V Sivankutty. However, in 2021, Sivankutty won the seat back for CPM. It is once again aiming for a breakthrough. BJP has placed state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar against sitting MLA and minister Sivankutty of the CPM, while the Congress has fielded its young face, K S Sabarinathan. With all three fronts investing heavily in the constituency, Nemom has become a testing ground for BJP's expansion strategy in Kerala. Any significant shift in votes here could carry implications far beyond this single seat.

Past winners: **2021 (CPM); 2016 (BJP); 2011 (CPM)**

Pala

Mani C Kappan | Cong

Jose K Mani, Kerala Cong (M)

Pala, long regarded as the bastion of Kerala Congress (Mani), is witnessing a contest loaded with legacy and internal party implications. Jose K Mani is seeking redemption after earlier setbacks, as he attempts to reclaim this central Kerala seat synonymous with his father, K M Mani. He faces incumbent MLA Mani C Kappan of the UDF, whose victory had already disrupted Kerala Congress's dominance. Another defeat for Jose K Mani could trigger serious questions about his leadership within the party. Adding unpredictability is BJP candidate Shone George, whose presence could split votes and influence the final outcome.

Past winners: **2021 (DCK); 2019 (NCP); 2016 (KCM)**

Palakkad

Ramesh Pisharody, Cong

Sobha Surendran, BJP

BJP narrowly lost here in 2021, but Palakkad remains one of its most promising seats. This time, the party has fielded Surendran. Congress has taken a calculated risk by nominating actor Ramesh Pisharody, hoping his public appeal will help retain the seat. CPM, which has struggled here in recent elections, has fielded N M R Razack, in a search for a strong contender. With BJP consistently improving its performance here, Palakkad could serve as a crucial indicator of whether the party can convert its incremental gains into an electoral breakthrough.

Past winners: **2021, 2016, 2011 (Cong)**

Betting big on personal charm in tiny UT

Bosco.Dominique @timesofindia.com

Though the demand for statehood featured in the campaign rhetoric of almost all parties, the battle for Puducherry unfolded less along strict party lines and more as a contest shaped by the personal clout of candidates with influence over specific constituencies.

The main fight is between chief minister N Rangasamy's All India NR Congress (AINRC)-led NDA and the Congress-led INDIA bloc. Seeking a second straight term, the AINRC-BJP alliance is banking on Rangasamy's personal appeal. But the presence of actor-turned-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) and Senthamizhan Seeman's Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) has added an element of uncertainty, with both seen as potential vote-splitters.

Spread across Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe, and Yanam, the UT's 30 elected assembly seats will shape the 33-member House, which also includes three members nominated by the Centre. Seat-sharing reflects the bipolar nature of the contest: AINRC is contesting 16 seats, BJP 10, and allies ADMK and LJK two each. In the opposition camp, Congress is in the fray in 16 seats and DMK in 14, with one of DMK's seats allotted to Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi.

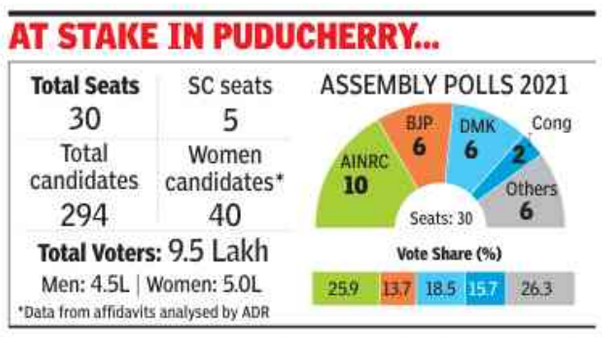
Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah, BJP national president Nitin Nabin, and Union minister J P Nadda campaigned for the NDA in the final stretch. For the INDIA bloc, MP Rahul Gandhi, Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin, and minister Udhayanidhi Stalin headlined rallies. The alliance targeted the incumbent govt by alleging that the UT was being run at Delhi's behest rather than by a govt that reflected the people's mandate.

Both camps have also had to manage internal strains. Congress faces rebellion in at least five constituencies, where dissidents are contesting against DMK nominees. On the NDA side, friction surfaced over accommodating Latchiya Jananayaga Katchi (LJK), led by Jose Charles Martin, son of lottery baron Santiago Martin. Rangasamy was reportedly reluctant to concede seats to the ally and agreed only after pressure from BJP.

Political observers say Puducherry's electoral politics have been steadily changing. "For the last two decades, Puducherry has seen a departure from strict party ideologies. The focus has shifted towards strong personalities who hold significant sway over specific constituencies," said political analyst D Santhosh. "In this landscape, Rangasamy has emerged as the central figure. In the absence of a strong, unifying opposition leader, the electoral narrative has consistently circled back to his personal popularity and leadership style," he added.

The real test may lie in whether Rangasamy's personal standing can once again carry the alliance through, whether BJP can deepen its footprint in the UT, or whether the opposition can overcome its own challenges. The answer will come on May 4, when the suspense over Puducherry's next govt ends.

AT STAKE IN PUDUCHERRY...



BJP talks turf, Cong looks to land knockout punch

Prabin.Kalita@timesofindia.com

Bruising allegations, denials, fiery rhetoric, and a flood of promises — from cows, buffaloes, and LPG cylinders to mustard oil, jobs and even justice for cultural icon Zubeen Garg within 100 days — the poll battle for Assam wasn't short on either fireworks or drama, while an element of intrigue was added by redrawn constituencies through delimitation.

Incumbent BJP and main challenger Congress engaged in a no-holds-barred campaign loaded with accusations of corruption and driven by their visions for upholding Assamese identity. BJP's theme of 'jati-mati-bheti' — protecting Assamese culture, language and identity while vowing to drive out every Bangladeshi 'miya' infiltrator — was so dominant that it drowned out even its own bouquet of welfare schemes, fresh or modified. Congress, on the other hand, focused primarily on its charge against CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and BJP's 'politics of hate".

Spearheaded by PM Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah, Sarma and other prominent leaders, BJP relentlessly attacked Congress, claiming it was encouraging infiltrators to settle in Assam to build a vote bank. Accusing Congress of failing to control insurgency or deliver development during its tenure, Sarma said he'd "broken the arms and legs of the miyas" during his five-year term, and vowed to "break their backbones" in the next five.

BJP reminded voters of its moves to grant land rights to tea garden workers, empower women, provide financial aid to girl students, and bring about a massive reduction in child marriage, and promised to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) if voted to power.

The party's manifesto has promised two lakh jobs, implementation of the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950, and fast-tracking of the detection and deportation of illegal migrants. It also said it would pitch Assam as India's 'Eastern Gateway', with a pledge to invest Rs 5 lakh crore to boost connectivity.

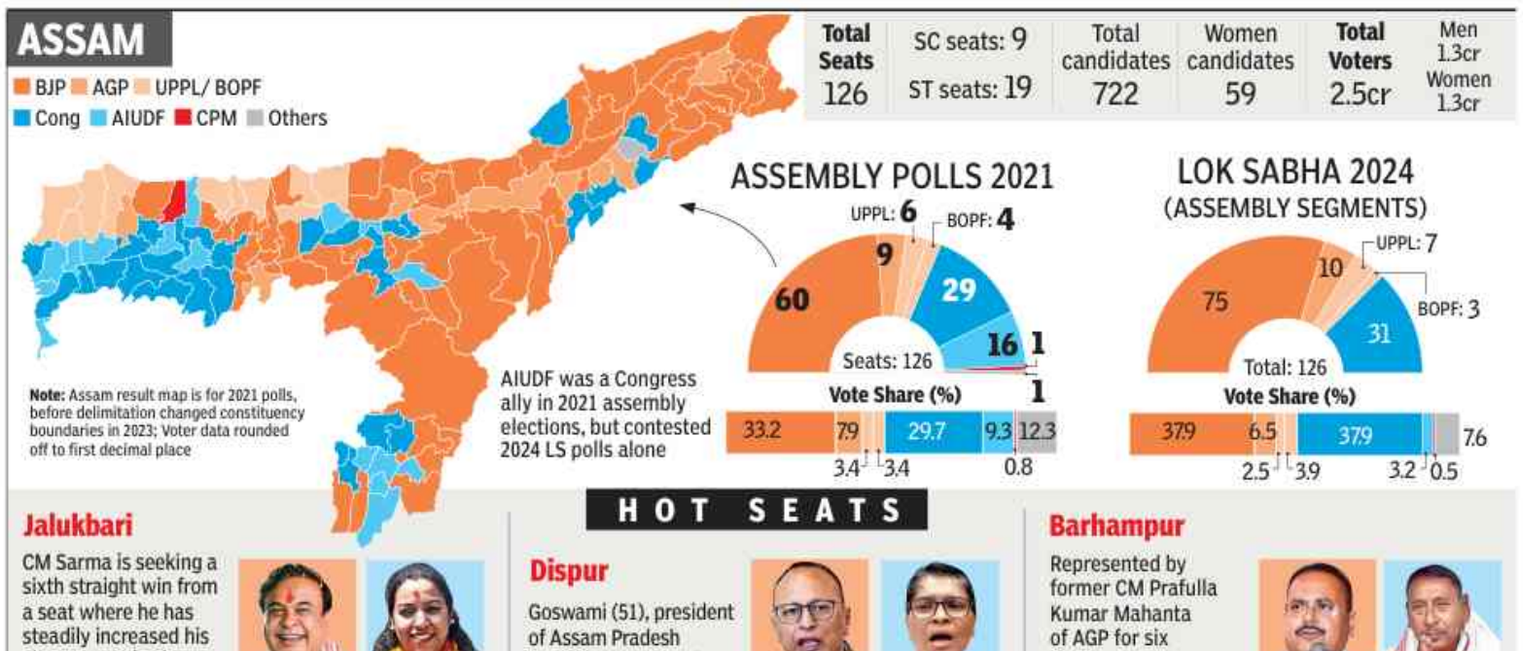
The grand old party accused Himanta and his wife of possessing undeclared assets and multiple passports — claims met with strong denials and police action from the couple.

In contrast to BJP's identity-driven pitch, Congress's campaign was built around the slogan, 'Natun Bor Asom', or 'A New Greater Assam', which intends to project the party's message of inclusiveness, renewal and change. The party has promised cash assistance for women, health insurance for all, and land rights for indigenous people. It has also said it would ensure justice for Zubeen Garg within 100 days if it were to form the govt.

The redrawing of boundaries as a result of the 2023 delimitation across Assam's 126 seats has reshaped the poll landscape in the state of 2.5 crore voters. All eyes are particularly on Muslim voters of Bangladesh origin, whose decisive influence has shrunk from 31 to 22 seats. While the change has reduced the electoral space for the attar baron Badruddin Ajmal-led AIUDF, it is seen to have strengthened — as Sarma has claimed — the prospects of indigenous candidates across the remaining 104 seats.

While the BJP-led alliance — comprising BPF, AGP and Rabha-Hasong Joutha Mancha — is eyeing a third straight term, the Congress-led bloc of Raijor Dal, AJP, All Party Hill Leaders Conference, CPM and CPI(ML)(L), will be looking to exploit anti-incumbency sentiments to win the state.

Women at an election rally on Tuesday, the last day of campaigning. Polls in Assam are being held in a single phase after a gap of 25 years



HOT SEATS

Jalukbari

Himanta Biswa Sarma, BJP

Bidisha Neog, Cong

CM Sarma is seeking a sixth straight win from a seat where he has steadily increased his victory margin since 2001, defeating his nearest rival by over 1 lakh votes in 2021. This time, he faces two first-timers, both women — Congress's Bidisha Neog, and Independent candidate Dipika Das. Confident of another landslide victory, Sarma has largely stayed away from active campaigning in Jalukbari this time, saying the voters will decide the outcome. His main challenger, Neog, argues that the CM is not unbeatable but would be aware of the uphill task she faces in this seat that is part of Guwahati city.

Past winners: **2021, 2016, 2011 (BJP)**

Dispur

Pradyut Bordoloi, BJP

Mira Borthakur Goswami, Cong

Goswami (51), president of Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress, takes on her former party colleague, Bordoloi (67), who has switched to, and has been fielded by, BJP. Bordoloi, who stepped down as the Nagaon MP to join hands with CM Sarma was a key figure behind Congress's "chargesheet" against the incumbent BJP-led govt. The seat, which covers capital Guwahati, was once an Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) stronghold that BJP's Atul Bora won in the last two elections. Bordoloi's task is made complicated by Jayanta Das, contesting as an Independent after being denied a BJP ticket.

Past winners: **2021, 2016 (BJP); 2011 (Cong)**

Barhampur

Jitu Goswami, BJP

Rajen Gohain, AJP

Represented by former CM Prafulla Kumar Mahanta of AGP for six consecutive terms from 1991, this seat was won by BJP following the seat-sharing arrangement for 2021. Sitting MLA Goswami is up against former mentor Rajen Gohain, 75, who has quit BJP and is contesting on an Assam Jatiya Parishad ticket. Gohain, a veteran, has roots in the RSS, but walked out of BJP after differences with its new brass. He served as the Nagaon MP from 1999 to 2019 and was also Union minister of state for railways in the first Narendra Modi govt at the Centre.

Past winners: **2021 (BJP); 2016, 2011 (AGP)**

Haflong

Nandita Gorlosa, Cong

Rupali Langthasa, BJP

A hill station constituency, Haflong is set for a high-stakes contest between Gorlosa and Langthasa, both belonging to the Dimasa community, an ethnolinguistic group living in parts of Assam and Nagaland. The saffron party won the seat in the last two polls, but dynamics have shifted this time with Gorlosa (48) — who won here in 2021 — switching to Congress after being denied a BJP ticket. The former state cabinet minister is banking on her experience and grassroots connect to retain the constituency. Challenging her is Langthasa (33), a newcomer. The contest is being framed as a clash between continuity and change, with Haflong's diverse electorate — comprising Dimasa, Zeme Naga, Hmar, and Kuki, among other communities — holding the key to victory.

Past winners: **2021, 2016 (BJP); Cong (2011)**

Jorhat

Gaurav Gogoi, Cong

Hitendra Nath Goswami, BJP

This seat in Upper Assam is shaping up to be one of the most closely watched contests of these polls, involving heavyweights Goswami and Gogoi, the state Congress chief. Goswami, 67, is the longest-serving MLA from Jorhat, with five wins here. The seasoned politician played an active role in the Assam Movement, served as a cabinet minister in the AGP govt (1996–2001), and as speaker of Assam assembly (2017-2021). He joined BJP a year after leaving AGP in 2013, and won Jorhat again in 2016 and 2021. Gogoi, also the deputy leader in Lok Sabha, represents Jorhat in Parliament. He is fighting his first assembly election from his father and three-time former Assam CM Tarun Gogoi's hometown.

Past winners: **2021, 2016 (BJP); Cong (2011)**

Instant divorce outlawed, postal talaq on rise, SC told

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Incidents of 'postal talaq' have spiralled after instant divorce through the unilateral pronouncement of 'talaq' three times in one sitting was declared un-co-nstitutional, a woman from West Bengal has complained to Supreme Court, saying some Muslim men use postal services to bypass the mandate for real and effective notice of talaq to their wives.

Narrating the plight of Sahara Malik, who faces the prospect of divorce as her husband has sent the first notice of talaq by post — to her parents house in Delhi, even though she resides at her matrimonial home in Bengal's South 24 Parganas — advocate Syed Rizwan Ahmed told a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi on Monday that as many as nine Muslim women had approached him with similar complaints of notices for talaq being sent to their parents' or their earlier addresses by post.

Recalling Supreme Court's intervention to set right a similar divorce proceeding through postal notices faced by another woman, Benazir Heena, Ahmed said, "It has become a serious problem for Muslim women as cases are rising exponentially across India. This requires an authoritative pronouncement from SC on 'talaq-e-hasan' and the procedure to be adopted."

The CJI Kant-led bench agreed that prima facie it appeared to be a serious issue requiring urgent final hearing. It assured Ahmed that the court would post the petition along with pending pleas on the issue for a final hearing on April 17, after conclusion of proceedings before Constitution benches.

NOTICE TO GOVT

The bench issued notices to Union ministries of law and justice, minority affairs, women and child development, and social justice and empowerment; National Commission for Women; National Human Rights Commission; National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and Sahara's husband, Initial Haque. The bench also asked Ahmed to give a copy of the petition to attorney general R Venkataramani for assistance.

In her petition, Sahara said, "The present case illustrates a serious procedural vulnerability in unilateral extra-judicial divorce. Where dissolution of marriage is sought without judicial oversight, the minimum requirement must be real and effective communication to the wife. Service of notice cannot be treated as a technical formality satisfied by dispatching it to any address available on record. It must ensure that the person whose marital status is being altered actually receives knowledge of such action."

Arguing that the issue at hand transcended individual matrimonial problems, she said, "If such a practice is permitted, it would enable husbands to send divorce notices to any former, parental, or recorded address of the wife without ensuring actual receipt of it by her, thereby rendering the process entirely one-sided." The consequence is that a woman may be divested of her marital status without ever being informed of the proceedings that affect her most fundamental civil and personal rights, Sahara said.

MP govt plans to implement UCC by Diwali

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh govt is planning to implement Uniform Civil Code by Diwali, advancing BJP's long-standing core agenda.

CM Mohan Yadav has tasked the home department with preparing a draft bill within six months after studying UCC laws enacted in Uttarakhand and Gujarat. A state-level panel comprising experts, will be formed to oversee the process. "It is essential to have the same set of laws for every citizen. With the UCC, India's unity, integrity, and a better future will be ensured," said minister Vishwas Sarang. TNN

Panel: Parent co liable if subsidiary cheats buyers

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@timesofindia.com

> **APIL and (its subsidiary) AHTTL are inextricably connected** and have been working together in cohesion under the overall control, direction and advice of **Pranav Ansal**, who is the chairman and whole-time director of APIL, and he is the **main decision-maker of not only APIL but also of other consortium members as well as its subsidiary**
>
> —NCDRC

New Delhi: In an important decision aimed at making the parent company liable if its subsidiary defaults on giving possession to homebuyers, National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has held Ansal Properties and Infrastructure Ltd (APIL) responsible for acts of omission and commission of Ansal Hi-Tech Township Ltd (AHTTL), which saw it failing to construct and hand over possession of flats to homebuyers. It also directed maintenance of status quo on APIL's assets till further orders from the commission.

Accepting the plea of advocate Aditya Parolia, the commission said that where the subsidiary is merely a façade, the corporate veil has to be lifted to identify the real entity at work. "Such corporate veil can be lifted if corporate structure is used as a cloak for fraud or improper conduct or where the two companies are inextricably connected or where there is abuse of process or where closely connected companies may, in reality, constitute a single economic entity... Doctrine of corporate character and separate legal entity cannot be permitted to become a vehicle of injustice," it said.

The bench, after scrutinising documents of the two companies, said that APIL and AHTTL are interlinked and the parent company has to be held responsible for the misdeeds of its subsidiary, which had kept homebuyers waiting for more than 18 years, with the hi-tech green township called 'Megapolis Green Hi Tech Township' in NCR remaining incomplete.

2 engg students killed as drunk driver rams bike

Hyderabad: Two engineering students were killed after a speeding car, driven by a drunk driver, rammed into their parked two-wheeler at Vanasthalipuram in the city late on Tuesday night. Another pedestrian was also injured by the car, before it hit a road divider and flipped over, police said. Police arrested the driver — K Ram Kumar Reddy, 34, a businessman — under Section 105 (for culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of the BNS. TNN

Indian institute of Corporate Affairs
(Ministry of Corporate Affairs)
Plot no. P-6,7,8, Sec-5, IMT Manesar, Distt. Gurgaon, Haryana.

IICA Invites applications from eligible and interested candidates for filling up the position of RBI Chair Professor on Contract basis.

For more details please visit our website-
https://iica.nic.in/Images/Vacancy-2026/RBI-CHAIR-PROFESSOR.pdf

ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
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(An Institute of National Importance under MoE, GoI)
Morena Link Road Gwalior-474015 | Website : www.iiitm.ac.in

No. 632 Dated 01.03.2026

Advertisement for the Full-Time/Part-Time Ph.D. Programme, July-2026

Online applications are invited for admission to the Full-Time/Part-Time Ph.D. programme in Engineering/Technology (CSE/EEE/IT), Management Studies, and Engineering Sciences. The last date for submitting the application is 20.04.2026 For more details and application forms, please visit the institute website: https://www.iiitm.ac.in. For any query, dial 0751-2449704/720 or email to phdadmission@iiitm.ac.in.

Joint Registrar (Academics)

IDEMI

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
INSTITUTE FOR DESIGN OF ELECTRICAL MEASURING INSTRUMENTS, MUMBAI
वैद्युतिक मापन उपयंत्र अभिकल्प संस्थान, मुंबई

Government Certificate Course on
Artificial Intelligence for chartered accountants & tax practitioners
Hands on Practices.

Course Duration 2 Days | Course Timing 10.30 PM TO 5.30 PM | Course Date 18,19 April 2026

Venue : IDEMI Extention Centre-C/O MSME Development Institute, West of Chord Rd. Industrial Estate, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560010
Email ID: training@idemi.org Website: www. Idemi.org Ph.:[022] 2405 0301/2/3/4

Contents: • Automation of like data collection and management • AI in tax filing, auditing and GST calculation • AI for accounting and Bookkeeping • Exploratory data analysis (EDA) • AI driven tools and technologies for CA • Budgeting, Cash Flow, and Forecasting • Corporate Tax Planning and Optimization • Tax Litigation Support and Case Analysis • Business Valuation and M&A Analysis • Transfer Pricing Analysis and Documentation • Statutory Audit Process Automation

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Contact-8007765693,9403566219,7823083980,9869087617
Documents required: Aadhar card xerox, Education documents, 2 Passport Photograph

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI
Corrigendum

Reference to the vacancy Notice invited for 01 contractual position for the post of "Consultant" at Office of the National Shipping Board, Chanderlok Building, 1st Floor Shipping Corporation of India 36, Janpath, New Delhi - 110001 dated 31 December 2025. This is to inform that the eligibility criteria has now been revised. The updated details eligibility, educational Qualification, Work Experience, and format for submission of application etc may be seen in the detailed advertisement placed at the DG Shipping website: **www.dgshipping.gov.in**. The last date for receipt of application is **14 days** from the date of publication of this advertisement.

Sr. No.	Description	No. of Vacancy	Renumeration	Eligibility Criteria
1.	Consultant	1	Last Pay Drawn Minus Pension	Retired official with **minimum 20 Years of experience in Government service with at least 5 years experience at the level of Under Secretary or equivalent (or higher).**

The corrigendum/Addendum, if any, will be uploaded on the DGS website only.

Note: Candidates who have already submitted their applications are not required to apply again

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

HIRING OF COUNSELLORS

Applications are invited against the following contractual positions for Crew Branch of the Directorate General of Shipping, 9th Floor, Beta Building, i-Think Techno Campus, Kanjurmarg (East), Mumbai - 400 042 (India). Eligible candidates may submit their CVs in the desired format to the office of the DGS via **email to** n.mukesh@gov.in and deo1.swfs@govcontractor.nic.in under the subject- **'Welfare Counsellor Application'** latest by **16:00 Hrs.** on **24 April 2026.** Detailed Advertisement, TOR (Term of Reference) & Application Procedure is available on the DGS website **www.dgshipping.gov.in**.

Sr No.	Position	No. of positions	Eligibility Criteria/ Qualification	Renumeration
01	Welfare Counsellor	01	1. M.A. degree in counselling psychology 2. Minimum 3-5 years of professional counselling experience 3. Experience in tele-counselling preferred 4. Crisis counselling and intervention 5. Suicide prevention and handling high-risk cases	₹ 60,000 per month

Corrigendum/ Addendum, if any, will be uploaded on the DGS website only
DGS reserves the right to cancel or modify this request without assigning any reason thereof.

राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण विकास एवं पंचायती राज संस्थान
NIRDPR
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATI RAJ
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500030

INVITES APPLICATION FOR PG DIPLOMA IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION

PG Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM) 2026-27 (One Year Residential Programme)

Eligibility : Bachelor's Degree with at least 50% Marks (45% for SC/ST/PWD)
Selection : Shortlisted candidates based on their graduation marks shall be called for group discussion and personal interview for final selection.
i) Last date : 25.05.2026 ii) Commencement of Course : July 2026

Apply online : **https://nirdpr.org.in/Admissions**
Further contacts : 9848780141 / 8790097776 / 9603829536
Email : cpgs@nird.gov.in, cpgs@nirdpr.org.in

File No. CPGS&DE/PGDM(RM)/ADMISSION/2018-1
Comp. no. 7626

Sd/- **Coordinator (Admissions), CPGS & DE**

National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)

भर्ती सूचना / RECRUITMENT NOTICE

भा.रा.रा.प्रा. **पदोन्नति / प्रतिनियुक्ति आधार** पर निम्नलिखित पद के लिए भर्ती हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित करता है:—

NHAI invites applications for recruitment to the following post **on Promotion / Deputation basis:-**

Post	No.	Pay Scale
मुख्य महाप्रबंधक (वित्त एवं लेखा) Chief General Manager (Finance & Accounts)	01	पे मैट्रिक्स में लेवल–14 (रु 144200–218200) Level-14 in the Pay Matrix (Rs. 144200-218200)

2. भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की वेबसाइट (**https://www.nhai.gov.in**) पर उपलब्ध विस्तृत विज्ञापन में दी गई प्रक्रिया के अनुसार आवेदक **दिनांक 08.05.2026 (सायं 06:00 बजे तक)** ऑनलाइन आवेदन जमा करना सुनिश्चित करें।
The applicant is required to ensure submission of online application as per the procedure indicated in the detailed advertisement, available on NHAI website (**https://www.nhai.gov.in**), by **08.05.2026 (upto 06:00 PM)**.
3. आयु सीमा, योग्यता मानदंड, अन्य शर्तें आदि से संबंधित विस्तृत विवरण भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की वेबसाइट पर देखे जा सकते हैं।
Details regarding age limit, eligibility criteria, other conditions etc. may be accessed on NHAI website.
4. इस विज्ञापन के संबंध में शुद्धिपत्र / अनुशेष / निरस्तीकरण, यदि कोई होगा तो, उसे केवल भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की वेबसाइट पर प्रकाशित किया जाएगा।
Corrigendum/Addendum/Cancellation to this advertisement, if any, shall be published on NHAI website only.

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the general public that our client **Mr. Kunal Balakrishne Gowda**, son of Mr. HD Balakrishne Gowda ('**Owner**'), is the sole and absolute owner in lawful and peaceful possession of immovable properties morefully described in the '**Schedule**' hereunder and is hereinafter referred to as the '**Schedule Properties**'. The Owner has acquired the Schedule Properties under a Sale Certificate dated 22.12.2025 (registered on 03.03.2026 as Document No. CRJ-I Part-(III)(a)-00001-2025-26, Book-1, at the office of the Sub-Registrar, Chamarajanagara) executed by Justice (Retd.) R.M. Lodha Committee.

Notice is hereby given that: (i) no person/s other than the Owner has any right, title, or interest in the Schedule Properties; (ii) any transaction, agreement, or document executed by any person/s claiming to act on behalf of or in respect of the Schedule Properties, without the express authorization of the Owner, shall be null and void and will not confer any right, title, or interest in the Schedule Properties; and (iii) any person/s entering, occupying, or attempting to use the Schedule Properties without the Owner's consent shall be deemed a trespasser. Unauthorized interference with the peaceful possession of the Schedule Properties will attract strict legal action, including criminal prosecution, under the applicable law.

SCHEDULE (Description of the Schedule Properties)

All that piece and parcel of immovable properties measuring in total 22 Acres 23 Guntas, all situated at Jakkahalli Village, Hangala Hobli, Gundlupet Taluk, Chamarajanagara District and described in the table below:

Sl No.	Survey No.	Extent	
		Acre	Guntas
1	1/1	03	01
2	59/1	00	09
3	55	02	38
4	56	03	19
5	57/2	01	35
6	58/2	02	26
7	59/2	02	15
8	110	04	00
9	57/1	02	00

Date: 09.04.2026. Place: Bengaluru.

Ms. Brijita Prakash, Partner
J. Sagar Associates, Advocates & Solicitors,
18th Floor, SKAV 909, No. 9/1, Residency Road, Richmond Circle, Bengaluru – 560025, Karnataka, India.
Ph. 080-43503600/080-43503676. Email: brijita.prakash@jsalaw.com

thsti BRIC-Translational Health Science and Technology Institute
(An Institute of the Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council, Govt. of India)
NCR Biotech Science Cluster, 3rd Milestone, Faridabad – Gurugram Expressway, P.O. Box No. 04, Faridabad – 121001

Recruitment Notice Nos. THS-C/RN/09/2026

THSTI proposes to fill the following post under CDSA:
1. Team Lead Data Science

For more details, please visit our website: www.thsti.res.in

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3 Weeks Online Summer Boot Camp

Topics Covered: • Graphic Designing • Video Editing • Digital Marketing with AI Tools • Website Designing • Content writing and Blogging
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Fees/ शुल्क: **4000/- only** (50% Discount for SC/ST & Women Candidates)

Benefits of the participants: • Hands-on Learning • Industry-Relevant Skills • Career Boosting • Portfolio Development • Networking Opportunities • Foundation for Freelancing & Entrepreneurship • Future Learning Path Guidance

Date/ दिनांक: **20th April to 8th May, 2026** Time/ समय: **06:30 PM Onwards**

For More Details, Course Content and Online Registration
Contact Number - 9810371728, 7983607199, 9677692445
E-mail- kathir.r@dcmsme.gov.in , msmeppdcdelhi@gmail.com
Certificate will be awarded

नीति आयोग
NITI AAYOG
भारत सरकार
Government of India

अटल इन्क्यूबेशन सेंटर - केंद्रीय कॉफ़ी अनुसंधान संस्थान (एआईसी-सीसीआरआई-सीईडी)
ATAL INCUBATION CENTRE
CENTRAL COFFEE RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(AIC-CCRI-CED)

COFFEE BOARD/कॉफ़ी बोर्ड
वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्रालय
Ministry of Commerce and Industry,
भारत सरकार/Government of India
नं. 1, डॉ. बी.आर. आंबेडकर वीथी,
No.1, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi,
बेंगलुरु / Bengaluru – 560 001.

रिक्ति सूचना / VACANCY NOTIFICATION

No. AIC-CCRI-CED/CEO/2026-27/27 **Date: 07.04.2026**

कॉफ़ी बोर्ड द्वारा **नीति आयोग की अटल नवाचार मिशन** के सहयोग से स्थापित **अटल इन्क्यूबेशन सेंटर-केन्द्रीय कॉफ़ी अनुसंधान संस्थान (एआईसी-सीसीआरआई)-उद्यमिता विकास केंद्र (सीईडी)**, नवोन्मेषी कॉफ़ी स्टार्ट-अप्स को प्रोत्साहित करने हेतु, मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी (सीईओ) के पद हेतु, पूर्णतः संविदा (कॉन्ट्रैक्चुअल) के आधार पर नियुक्ति के लिए पात्र भारतीय नागरिकों से आवेदन आमंत्रित करता है। पात्रता मापदंड, आवेदन प्रपत्र, नियम एवं शर्तें, वार्षिक कंपनी की लागत, आदि का विस्तृत विवरण **कॉफ़ी बोर्ड की वेबसाइट https://coffeeboard.gov.in** से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है।

AIC-CCRI, Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) established by Coffee Board with the support of **NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission** to nurture innovative Coffee Startups, invites applications from the eligible Indian Citizens for the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO), purely on contractual basis. Details of Eligibility Criteria, Application Format, Terms and Conditions, Annual CTC etc., can be downloaded from **Coffee Board's Website - https://coffeeboard.gov.in**

पूर्ण रूप से भरे हुए आवेदन प्राप्त होने की अंतिम तिथि 18.04.2026 है।

The last date for receipt of filled in applications is 18.04.2026.

दिनांक 30.12.2025 की अधिसूचना को निरस्त किया जाता है, क्योंकि अधिसूचित पात्रता मानदंडों के अनुसार कोई भी अभ्यर्थी पात्र नहीं पाया गया। अतः यह पुनः अधिसूचना जारी की जाती है। इसके अतिरिक्त, एआईसी-सीसीआरआई-सीईडी बिना कोई कारण बताए उक्त पद को भरने या न भरने का अधिकार सुरक्षित रखता है।

Notification dated 30.12.2025 is hereby cancelled as no candidate was found eligible as per eligibility criteria notified. Accordingly, this re-notification is issued. Further, AIC-CCRI-CED reserves the right to fill up or not to fill up the position without assigning any reason thereof.

मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी एवं सचिव / CEO & Secretary
कॉफ़ी बोर्ड / Coffee Board

MIFF 2026 | NFDC cinemas of india

19th MIFF
MUMBAI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2026
Documentary | Short Fiction | Animation
15 June - 21 June 2026

Last date of submissions
EXTENDED
Till 12 April 2026 by 11:30 PM (IST)
Last date for submission of hard copies of documents - 17 April 2026 by 05:30 PM (IST)

HIGHLIGHTS
• Golden Conch + ₹10 Lakhs for Best Documentary (International competition)
• ₹45 Lakhs total cash awards in various other categories
• Best Short Fiction Film
• Best Animation Film
• Best Debut Film
• Best Student Film
• Technical awards

Scan to submit your film

CBC 22105/15/0003/2627

Websites: miff.in
filmfreeway.com/MumbaiInternationalFilmFestival-MIFF

रजिस्ट्री सं. डी.एल. 33004/99 REGD. NO. D. L.-33004/99

भारत का राजपत्र
The Gazette of India

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असाधारण
EXTRAORDINARY
भाग II—खण्ड 3—उप-खण्ड (ii)
PART II—Section 3—Sub-section (ii)
प्राधिकार से प्रकाशित
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

सं. 1607] नई दिल्ली, बुधवार, अप्रैल 1, 2026/ चैत्र 11, 1948
No.1607] NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026/ CHAITRA 11, 1948

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 1st April, 2026

S.O. 1672(E).— Whereas by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, S.O.152 (E) Dated:05/01/2026 , published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (ii) issued under sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highway Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government declared its intension to acquire the land specified in the Schedule annexed to the said notification for building (widening/four-laning, etc.), maintenance, management and operation of Belgaum-Hungund-Raichur section NH 748A in the stretch of land from Km. 0+000 to Km. 43+800 in the district of BELAGAVI in the state of KARNATAKA

And whereas the substance of the said notification has been published in "The Times of India" and "Vijayavani" both dated 22.01.2026 under sub-section (3) of section 3A of the said Act;

And whereas objections have been received and the same have been considered and disallowed by Competent Authority;

And whereas, in pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the competent authority has submitted its report to the Central Government;

Now, therefore, upon receipt of the said report of the competent authority and in exercise of the powers conferred by the sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that the land specified in the said Schedule should be acquired for the aforesaid purpose;

And further, in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that on publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, the land specified in the said Schedule shall vest absolutely in the Central Government, free from all encumbrances.

SCHEDULE

Brief description of the land to be acquired, with or without structure, falling within the stretch of land Belgaum-Hundgund-Raichur from CH. Km. 0+000 to Km. 43+800 stretch NH 748A in the district of BELAGAVI in the state of KARNATAKA

District: BELAGAVI
Publication Date: 01.04.2026
https://egazette.gov.in
https://morth.gov.in
https://bhoomirashi.gov.in

Scan for Notification in English & Hindi

Scan for Kannada Translated from English Notification

[F. No. NHAI/PIU-HPT/15052/LA-03/2021-22/3A/3D]
SHAIKH AMIN KHAN, Director

Note: The physical copy of this notification is also available at the office of CALA/PIU/PMU/RO/ED and Landowners may also see the notification there.

A thought for today

When things begin accelerating wildly out of control, sometimes patience is the only answer. Press pause

DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF

Two Weeks' Notice

US and Iran must turn their temporary truce into permanent peace. It's in everyone's interest

After 39 days of war, which left more than 2,000 Iranians dead, drove up energy prices, and pummelled stocks, Iran and US have agreed to a two-week ceasefire. Israel's said it will go along with US, but won't stop attacks on Lebanon, although that's one of Iran's pre-conditions. So, it's a "fragile truce", as Vance puts it. There have been violations already. An Iranian refinery was hit soon after truce was announced, then Iran struck infra in Kuwait, UAE, and Bahrain. Still, the price of crude fell sharply on Wednesday, and stocks everywhere rallied. That's because this truce is the least bad scenario right now. Far better than a long war that keeps Hormuz Strait blockaded, and results in a recession.

Markets may be up, but realists aren't chuffed about the truce. There are simply too many unknowns in it, even though Trump claims, "Big money will be made...this could be the Golden Age of the Middle East." For starters, there's Hormuz. US says truce starts only after the Strait reopens, but Iran insists ships will pass under its control. Then there's Lebanon, where Hezbollah has agreed to halt strikes on Israel. But, will Israel pass up the chance to strike harder, while it doesn't have to defend itself against Iran? Trump and other world leaders must press it to stop.

Iranian media claims US-Iran talks will start in Islamabad tomorrow, between Iran's speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and Vance. But there's no American confirmation yet. The biggest question is, can both sides reconcile their differences in two weeks? Iran's 10 demands include removal of all sanctions, which have hobbled it for 47 years, compensation for damage suffered in war, recognition of its right to enrich uranium, and removal of US troops from the region. It's hard to imagine US agreeing to these, even though Trump's said the list is a "workable basis on which to negotiate". America's 15 demands, which Iran rejected earlier, include surrender of its enriched uranium, and caps on its missile programme.

We can only hope they find common ground, or extend the truce to keep talking. Because, this war hurts everyone. RBI yesterday said it sees crude at $85 this year, whereas in Jan, crude seemed headed below $60 due to oversupply. Reduced remittances from Gulf countries, and slowdown in foreign demand, could also subdue growth in India this year. Everything depends on what happens over the next two weeks.

Auntie Climax

Sued for calling a colleague auntie? A UK case calls out casual ageism/sexism at the workplace

In a clash of continents, so to speak, UK's National Health Service must pay an Indian-origin nurse £1,425, after a Ghanaian-origin younger colleague ignored her repeated requests to stop calling her 'auntie'. The judge noted the different cultures, and ruled that the complainant's allegations of harassment, on grounds of age and gender, were legitimate.

No doubt, many Indians are puzzled. What's wrong with calling someone 'auntie'? Context and continent. People, globally, can be blissfully, and selectively, oblivious to the social weight, words and titles carry. In India, as in Ghana, auntie is used commonly. It underscores familiarity with older women in family, in social circles and neighbourhoods. But, in India, and also in Ghana, auntie is equally used as an ageist and lookist slight – for women who'd police behaviour and are deemed judgy, for those considered no longer 'cool or trendy', and several other women-centric stereotypes. In UK, familiarity stops when you exit your front door – no one is your auntie, except your aunt. Who would, in fact, likely, be called by name.

That said, it is all in the tone. Across India, 'auntie' can also denote a teasing, indulgent regard, for someone who looks out for others, speaks hard truths, is witty and acerbic. It's a word of substance, with worlds of meanings, that 'uncle' can never capture. To be called Whatsapp/RWA uncle is, ouch!, no compliment – who wants to be the hyperactive, partly retired, fwds-savvy, community vigilante, the smartphone addict, who stands for everything that's exhausting to the free spirit? But, whatever the context and even, consent, cross-continent commonality is that 'auntie' has no place in the workplace. It brings the village to the worksite. In the UK case, ageism and sexism – some will argue it was 'well-intentioned' – were evident. The male nurse suggested who his senior would be a "good match for". It's a rare woman in India, who hasn't suffered intrusive commentary on marriage – it's the first licence to call someone 'auntie'.

Rolls of the dice

Electoral rolls, kathi rolls, same-shame in Kolkata

Bachi Karkaria

Elections in single-engine states have a longer train of mishaps. West Bengal CM has raised the 'bogie' of derailment. Her CEC, Chief Election Complaint, is the Speciously Illogical Revision of rolls. Railing against it, she claims that the (real) EC has pressed 'Del Alt Ctrl', using SIR's summary deletions to alter the electoral rolls and thus control results. The tension has shifted from 'Who'll get voted?' to 'Who'll get to vote?' Or 'Who's left to vote?'

Raring-to-come BJP has pulled out all the stops to stop the return of Too Much Corrupt party. In this regime-change war, a relentless bombardment of ads urges the City of Joy to replace the climate of '*Bhoy*' (fear) with '*Bhorosha*' (that's trust, not the way Bengali *varsha;* rain has already been ushered in by the season's squally nor'westers).

Oodi baba! Too much hiss and sizzle, *na*? Let's add that of Kolkata's signature snack. Kindly don't dismiss it as 'nonsense *kotha*'. *Kathi* rolls and electoral rolls are not polls apart.

Candidates hold road shows; show me a Kolkata road that doesn't hold a roll-stall.

erratica

Party meetings are election-time staple; *kathi* eating is party-time staple.

Paratha-atta is vigorously worked on to make it pliant; just like voters.

Dough is kneaded for rolls; more dough is needed for polls.

The *paratha* stays on the frying *tawa; kabab* on the fire. Candidates could fall from one into the other.

Poll promises are beefed up, but ultimately chickened out of. The veg *kathi*-roll has *aloo*. Omnivorous politicians could end up with a hot potato.

Turncoats skew the old party's prospects. Voters should skewer them.

Ekta difference. Roll feeds the hand that bites it; ungrateful pollitician does *ulto*.

At the end of it all, one party is on a roll, the other gets flattened like a paratha – maybe like the *anda* variation, even with egg on its face.

***

Alec Smart said: "Trump calls it 'I-ran'; it could also be his fate."

Ceasefire Done, Gulf Remains

For peace, both US & Iran must realise neither's position is as strong as they believe, nor is their adversary as weak as they would prefer. But they are not there yet

Rouzbeh Parsi

Iran expert, Lund Univ, Sweden

In agreeing to a two-week ceasefire on the Iran war, Trump's imperial presidency and cult of personality – which had already generated serious problems domestically – reached a logical crescendo. A war without strategy, escalated step by step in an attempt to force Tehran to save Trump from himself, by simply acquiescing to his narrative and worldview. As reported by *New York Times* on April 7, Israeli PM Netanyahu pushed hard for this war, convincing a readily persuadable Trump, that toppling the Islamic Republic would be straightforward.

Netanyahu's involvement is no surprise; more depressing is how little pushback Trump received from his closest associates – despite their supposed misgivings. Whether Netanyahu believed his own spin regarding Iran, is difficult to know at this point. What is clear is that his objective was never a lofty democratic transformation of Iran; getting the war started was the goal. Throughout this war, Israel has systematically killed Iranian top leaders, including those who could negotiate with Trump, and together with US forces, methodically bombed Iranian infra.

Neither US nor Iran will emerge from this conflict unchanged. But it's US that had the most to prove; Tehran, in a sense, achieved something significant simply by surviving the battering, and proving that it can hurt US, its allies, and world economy. As far as Tehran is concerned, it has forced the world to acknowledge that while it may be somewhat internationally isolated, the repercussions of attacking it are global.

Several times in recent weeks, White House has leaked that it is conducting negotiations with Iran. The Iranian side has rejected these claims, conceding only once that any conversation has taken place. For Trump, this has been about calming markets and reassuring his domestic political audience – who appear to believe him each time, despite mounting evidence to the contrary.

Trump's latest threat amounted to an advance declaration of war crimes: "A whole civilisation will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will." What is most ominous is not the threat itself, but the absence of any effective resistance within White House to rhetoric of this kind.

The European reaction to Trump's threats was tepid at best, and yet again indicates how marginal EU has become, and how little it brandished the tarnished flag of a rules-based order. A much sharper and credible critique came from Pope Leo XIV, who reminded the belligerents that attacking civilian infra is against international law, and called Trump's threats "truly unacceptable".

The war has not ended, but both parties have entered a first critical phase: feeling their way towards a durable compromise. Both sides come to this two-week ceasefire with maximalist demands that are, at face value, irreconcilable. Given the Trump administration's unreliability, it's unclear whether US will seriously engage with the Iranian demands. For Tehran, the risk of accepting a ceasefire is that it significantly reduces economic and political pressure on Trump, potentially leading him to conclude that the problem is resolved, or that he can afford another round.

Image: AI

The deeper question is, whether both parties have the wherewithal to accept that a durable agreement requires compromise – that their own position is not as strong as they believe, and the adversary's not as weak as they would prefer.

US, which chose this war for no particularly good reason, must absorb this lesson most urgently. It took Washington and Tehran almost two years (2013-2015) to establish a confidence-building process, and then negotiate a permanent agreement to the nuclear issue. The conditions are far worse now, and the problem complex that needs to be solved is much larger than just a nuclear file.

In the doublespeak of White House, regime change has already occurred – the previous top leaders in Tehran have been killed. This recklessness with reality and language, may work within the DC bubble, but the coming negotiations will reveal its inherent hollowness. A real peace process will require Trump to acknowledge that he is not governing in the world of Feb 27, 2026, the day before he initiated the war – when US military prowess appeared unquestioned.

A durable outcome requires a process in which trust can be established, and painful compromises reached. The Trump administration's understanding of Iran has always been more ideological than factual, and the negotiation team's political and technical skills have never been strong. Whether Washington can gain the requisite clarity for the coming negotiations to go anywhere, remains to be seen.

Given the wanton destruction of civilian infra and cultural sites, Iran cannot afford a half-measure that resolves nothing, and leaves a post-war situation that includes continued draconian American sanctions. For Tehran, war is, therefore, preferable to non-peace, and yet Iran as a country can hardly afford a long war. The US-Israeli bombing campaign has destroyed universities, hospitals, power plants, and other civilian infra. Rebuilding of these societal institutions and services will require money and time, neither of which will be available, if there is no durable peace.

If the Iranian political and military leaderships are in lockstep, and if US negotiators understand that Iran is not as weak as they like to claim, then perhaps this can be the beginning of the path towards peace. It is, however, all too easy to see all the pitfalls along that trek.

THE GULF STREAM OF KERALA POLITICS

Emigrants form 8% of the state electorate, are active participants in homeland affairs. Extent to which war has deterred them from travelling to vote this time, may affect a closely fought election's outcome

VJ Varghese

As Kerala votes today, an important question is, whether the Israel-US war against Iran will impact voter participation, and electoral outcome. Because it's thrown the Gulf Cooperation Council region, which accommodates a large number of overseas Keralites, into turmoil. The new ceasefire may have come too close to election day, to offset war's damper.

State govt's *Pravasi Malayalee Census* (2013) pegged the total number of overseas Malayalees at 1.63mn, out of which 90% work in Gulf region. The 2023 round of *Kerala Migration Survey* estimates the number at 2.15mn, out of which more than 80% work in GCC.

Overseas migrants thus constitute over 6% of Kerala's population, way above the 1% at the national level. The state contributes about 13% of India's NRI population. Despite the diversification of destinations and pathways in recent years, Kerala still displays a greater preference for the GCC countries.

Obstacles in the way of permanent residency and citizenship in GCC countries, are well known. Structurally, these motivate the emigrants to maintain closer ties with home. And in a way, over time, Gulf has become part of the extended geography of Kerala. This is through diverse forms of migrant exchanges – material, ideological, affective. Every incident in the Gulf feels like an intimate experience in Kerala, through its overseas citizens and their families back home.

These contiguous, transnational ties are reflected in active involvement in homeland politics. Overseas Keralites are not just passive witnesses to Kerala politics, but also active creators of it.

Consider the recent, political parody song, *Pottiye Kettiye,* which satirised the Sabarimala gold theft controversy. It was written by a Qatar-based Malayalee emigrant, only to go viral across the state, during the last local body election, and it continues to be a major campaign tool for Congress-led UDF.

Such an active transnational political sphere enables *pravasi* demands, and programmes for their welfare, to figure prominently in the politicking and election manifestos of mainstream political parties, alongside mobilising resources and votes transnationally.

Indeed, elections in Kerala have been fought transnationally, for quite some time. Hundreds travel particularly from GCC countries, for the election campaign, and thousands for voting. This has also been enabled by the changing profile of emigrants over time – from predominantly unskilled and semi-skilled workers to skilled workers, professionals, and entrepreneurs.

In the mid-90s, Kerala contributed about 40% of workers who migrated through the GOI emigration clearance channel, for unskilled and semi-skilled labour. This number has declined dramatically over the last three decades,

Image: AI

reaching 3% in 2025. Emigrants with higher earnings and financial capability have thus increased, leading to frequent travel, and the collapse of distance.

Kerala has 2,71,42,952 voters on the electoral roll this time. The 2.15mn overseas Keralites represent about 8% of this electorate. According to electoral rules, if a citizen of India stays outside the country for more than six months at a stretch, his/her name gets deleted from the rolls. However, a majority of Kerala NRIs manage to retain their name in the rolls, as general electors/voters.

In 2011, ECI introduced the category of Overseas Elector, for Indian citizens "absent from his/her place of ordinary residence in India owing to employment, education, or otherwise and have not acquired citizenship of any other country". Kerala has witnessed a massive expansion of Overseas Electors in the recently held SIR of electoral rolls.

This jump to 2,23,558 from 92,429 in 2021, is at a time when the electoral roll got slimmer by 9L votes overall, after the revision. The number went further up to 2,42,093 (2,04,218 men, 37,867 women, and eight transgender voters), when the final list was published on March 23.

Kozhikode district has as many as 60,258 Overseas Electors, followed by Kannur (58,279), Malappuram (41,962), Thrissur (24,194), and Kasargod (12,277). Certain constituencies in northern Kerala, like Kuttiyadi (16,002), Nadapuram (12,424), Tirur (8,601), and Kalliasseri (8,097), have a large concentration of Overseas Electors. Added to this are the overseas Keralites who continue to figure in electoral rolls as general voters, with their larger concentration in districts like Malappuram, Kannur, Kozhikode, Thrissur, and Kollam.

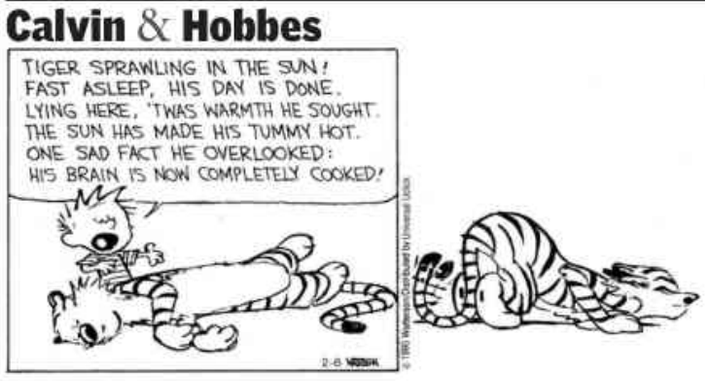
War has disrupted normal travel schedules, made emergency and chartered flights prohibitively costly and uncertain, besides inflicting other economic and emotional insecurities. All this could dissuade most overseas Keralites from exercising their franchise, in this election.

War will also have a cascading effect on voter inflow from non-GCC locations (witnessing increased temporary migrations in recent times), due to the disruption of flight schedules through the Gulf, and exorbitant fares for alternative routes. Even inflow of non-resident Keralite voters from within India could weaken, because of airfares having shot up, due to the war-induced acceleration in aviation fuel prices, complemented by the summer vacation surges.

Assembly elections are, in general, fought closely in Kerala. In 2011, the winning and losing alliances were separated by just 1,68,520 votes. With the war expected to weaken the voting participation of overseas Keralites, any impact on voting percentage may also be seen in the electoral outcome. After all, Dec's local body elections demonstrated a strong sense of anti-incumbency. And now, a very close fight is forecast in many seats.

The writer is a specialist in migration studies, and teaches at Hyderabad Central University

Calvin & Hobbes


TIGER SPRAWLING IN THE SUN!
FAST ASLEEP, HIS DAY IS DONE.
LYING HERE, 'TWAS WARMTH HE SOUGHT.
THE SUN HAS MADE HIS TUMMY HOT.
ONE SAD FACT HE OVERLOOKED:
HIS BRAIN IS NOW COMPLETELY COOKED!

Sacred*space*

The moon will guide you through the night with her brightness, but she will always dwell in the darkness, in order to be seen.

Shannon L Alder

A Neutral Gaze Redefines Spiritual Experience

Narayani Ganesh

Kashmiri mystic Lalleshwari, also known as Lal Ded, wandered naked, expressing her devotion to the divine in poetic outpourings. Her presence and aura were so overpowering that no one dared stop her. She was a woman who had liberated herself from mundane shackles and she went on to create history both in Kashmiri literature and spirituality. Could her gaze be described as female, as opposed to the male gaze, considering that she had risen above gender stereotypes and was not constrained by patriarchal societal expectations? Not really.

Lal Ded's was a spiritual gaze that rose from her deep longing for the infinite; it's just that she happened to belong to the female gender. If she were male, she might have been likened to the Persian mystic Jalaluddin Rumi, whose heartfelt love for the Divine, he expressed as would a lover, pining for his beloved. Was Rumi's a male gaze? Not really. It just so happened that these outpourings came from someone who belonged to the male gender. The gaze of both Lal Ded and Rumi can be described as neutral gaze that had nothing to do with gender trappings.

When we talk about female gaze, we may be referring to the practice of seeing things from a woman's inclusive point of view or experience, as opposed to the male gaze that stems from perhaps a more patriarchal, sexual, even selfish perspective. Women, by nature, are given to selfless, sensitive nurturing and caring, protecting and sustaining, whereas conventionally, men tend to be more aggressive, sexually (testosterone) driven, and incline towards insensitive domination. These are, of course, stereotypes, for you do have women and men who exhibit a mix of these qualities or more.

THE SPEAKING TREE

A softer, compassionate and empathetic female gaze need not be the preserve of the female (biological) gender. And an aggressive, not-so-caring, dominating, insensitive male gaze is also not the exclusive preserve of the male (biological gender). You may see either gender exhibiting qualities of the other.

An equanimous mix of the two is what works best, and perhaps that is why we mirror this intersection of male and female energies, inter-connectedness and inter-being of genders in the form of Ardhanarishwara, half-male, half-female representation of Shiv and Shakti, Purusha and Prakriti. Being masculine or feminine is no longer cast in stone; these attributes have gained greater fluidity and adaptation both biologically and metaphorically. We are not talking about physical gender transformations as in transgenders but in the more metaphysical, psychological aspects that go to make up an individual's personality. A so-called macho male could also be gentle and sweet, caring and nurturing. And a gentle, feminine woman could also be as hard as steel and unyielding, when it comes to decision-making and actions.

Yin and Yang of Taoism are symbolic of male and female energies that make up the composite whole. Moving beyond stereotypical gender descriptions, it is more instructive to see individuals for what they are via nature and nurture, how they think, act, and conduct themselves both in their personal and public spaces. The Atman, soul, has no gender. It is neutral, for it is neither male nor female. The soul is beyond societal and physical conscriptions and expectations. The higher Self, universal consciousness, is eternal, unchanging, all-inclusive and infinite. The neutral gaze is what works best.

ganeshnarayani@yahoo.com

TIMES BUSINESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

RBI Guv Sanjay Malhotra On Economy, Global Headwinds

ON SUPPLY-SIDE SHOCKS
The initial **supply shock can potentially transform into a demand shock over the medium term** if the restoration of supply chains is delayed for many months

ON POLICY STANCE AND GROWTH
We are in a neutral stance, so possibilities either way cannot be ruled out. **It is quite possible that low rates could continue.** The Indian economy remains structurally strong, resilient and robust

ON FOREX MEASURES AND RUPEE
Our forex measures are specific to the observed volatility and are not structural. We remain committed to market development and internationalisation. These steps were necessary to address speculative positions that were increasing volatility

ON USING RATES FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY
Theoretically, monetary policy is a tool for providing financial stability, but we do not think, as of now, there is a use case

ON FARM LOAN WAIVERS
Our view is that loan waivers should not be general; they should be targeted. We have a framework for the kinds of relief to be accorded in consultation with banks

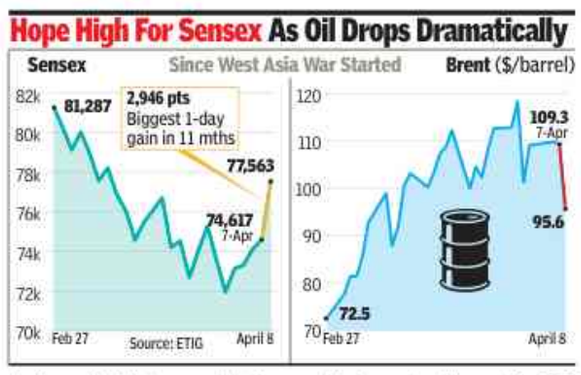
D-Street cheers West Asia truce, sensex up 3k points

Investors Richer By ₹16.3L Cr | Crude Falls 13% To $95.6/BBL

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The overnight temporary truce in the war in West Asia prompted investors globally to press the buy button on Wednesday which led to sharp rallies in markets around the globe including in India. Starting with Japan, across Hong Kong, China, Pakistan, the UK, Germany, and in the evening the US, all the markets were in a buoyant mood and closed higher.

With crude oil prices crashing to below the psychologically important $100/barrel level and rupee strengthening, sensex gained 2,946 points or 4% to close at 77,563 points, nearly a one-month high level. The day's nearly 3,000-point rise for the index was its second biggest single-day gain in history The day's rally also added Rs 16.3 lakh crore to investors' wealth—the biggest single-day boost in history—with India's market capitalisation now at Rs 445 lakh crore, BSE data showed.



All the sectoral indices closed higher with real estate, auto and financial services industries leading. The day's sharp rally came on the back of strong buying by domestic funds with a net inflow of Rs 4,168 crore, while foreign funds continued to remain sellers with the net outflow at Rs 2,812 crore, BSE data showed. The ceasefire between Iran and the US, declared on Tuesday evening, still looks fragile, though India can now breathe easy on several fronts.

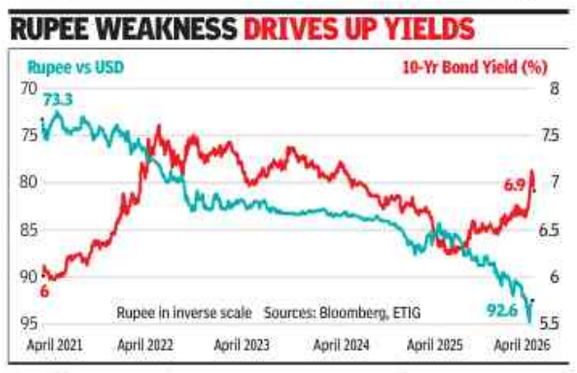
According to Nilesh Shah, MD, Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund, from India's point of view, the safety of 90 lakh Indians working in the Persian Gulf region, availability of energy with the likely opening of the Strait of Hormuz, price of energy nearing pre-war levels and pre-war level remittance flows from West Asia are critical. Shah, however, cautioned that the markets will continue to react to events and 'there could be many slips between the cup and the lip,' indicating the fragile nature of the ceasefire. "Investors should follow their dharma of asset allocation. Don't chase momentum swinging by events. Be a disciplined investor catching a falling knife," he said.

The day's rally that came as a big relief to investors and traders on D-Street, was reflected in the sharp downturn in the volatility index as India VIX closed the session 20% down at 19.7 points, NSE data showed. Among the 30 sensex constituents, 27 closed with gains with InterGlobe Aviation (Indigo) up 8.2% while L&T closed 7.6% higher.

RBI holds rates, projects 6.9% growth in 2026-27

Says Inflation May Shoot Up To 4.6%, Forex Measures In Place For Banks Temporary

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



Mumbai: Hours after the US announced a pause in hostilities in West Asia, triggering a global rally in financial markets, the Monetary Policy Committee of Reserve Bank of India unanimously decided to keep the policy rate unchanged at 5.25% for the second consecutive meeting, with governor Sanjay Malhotra expressing cautious optimism about keeping rates lower for longer.

The governor outlined multiple areas of concern. Elevated crude oil prices could increase imported inflation and widen the current account deficit. Disruptions in energy markets, fertilisers and other commodities may adversely impact industry, agriculture and services, reducing domestic output. Heightened uncertainty, increased risk aversion and safe-haven demand could affect domestic liquidity conditions, economic activity, consumption and investment, he added. External demand may weaken and remittances may slow. Financial spillovers could tighten conditions and raise borrowing costs.

The optimism was reflected in the oil price assumption, which RBI expects to average $85 per barrel this year, indicating expectations of early normalisation or a sharp drop ahead. The governor also reassured markets that the forex measures limiting banks' open positions and barring client exposure to offshore markets were not structural and were aimed only at preventing "excessive speculation" from becoming self-fulfilling. "We remain committed to deepening and internationalising the market. These measures are temporary and will be reviewed as conditions stabilise," said Malhotra.

Another sign that the policy stance is dovish was RBI's decision to ease capital norms and reserve requirements for banks. Measures such as the removal of the Investment Fluctuation Reserve requirement and easing of Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio computation norms will strengthen banks' capital positions and help support credit growth on a sustained basis, said SBI chairman CS Setty, who is also the chairman of the Indian Banks Association.

RBI has forecast GDP growth at 6.9% for the year, with a quarterly profile of 6.8% (6.9% earlier) in Q1, 6.7% in Q2 (7% earlier), 7% in Q3 and 7.2% in Q4. Inflation, by contrast, is expected to run higher, with CPI at 4.6% for the year, broken down into 4% in Q1, 4.4% (4.2% earlier) in Q2, 5.2% in Q3 and 4.7% in Q4.

According to Madan Sabnavis, chief economist, Bank of Baroda, these projections virtually indicate few chances of any further rate cuts, as RBI has flagged El Nino as a risk to inflation too. "The view on economic prospects is balanced and indicates resilience to a large extent. The RBI has reiterated that it has no view on the value of the rupee, which should convince markets," he added.

Globally, RBI has painted a cautious picture. Trade is set to slow in 2026 relative to 2025, dragged down by tariff-related uncertainties, the West Asia conflict and elevated energy prices. India is already seeing the effects: merchandise exports have contracted while imports have surged, widening the trade deficit. Services exports and remittances may cushion the blow, keeping the current account deficit "moderate", but rising energy prices and global uncertainty pose upside risks. Even so, India appears sturdier than in past crises, and stronger than some peers, Malhotra said.

'India may beat RBI's growth forecast'

Kolkata: India may exceed RBI's GDP growth projection for 2026-27, S Mahendra Dev, chairman of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, said Wednesday. He said the economy could achieve 7% growth against RBI's projection of 6.9%. "I am more positive about growth and hoping for 7%. Last year we achieved 7.6%, but many said it would not exceed 7%. Our economy has a lot of inherent strength," he said. On rupee, Dev said the currency is expected to stabilise around 92-93 against the dollar, with foreign investment flows likely to improve as geopolitical tensions ease. TNN

India may stay key driver of south Asian growth: WB

New Delhi: The World Bank in its latest south Asia economic update Wednesday said India is expected to remain the main driver of regional growth, with output for the current financial year projected at 6.6%, up from 6.3% projected in Oct. It noted that growth is estimated to have accelerated from 7.1% in FY25 to 7.6% in FY26, owing to strong domestic demand and export resilience. "Private consumption growth was particularly robust, supported by low inflation and rationalisation of the GST. Growth is projected to decelerate to 6.6% in FY27, reflecting headwinds from the West Asia conflict," it noted. TNN

crazy bosses 500TH
SHOWING UP IS HALF THE JOB. — LEAVING LATE IS THE OTHER NINETY-NINE PERCENT
APPOINTMENT
ART: IAN BAKER
SUNILAGARWAL.IN

US court accepts Adani plea to drop fraud case

New York: A US judge granted a request from Gautam Adani to schedule a hearing in his effort to dismiss a US Securities and Exchange Commission fraud case, which he says lacks necessary jurisdiction as well as fails on multiple reasons. This followed lawyers of Adani and his nephew, Sagar filing a plea seeking dismissal of the case. In the filing, Adanis' lawyers said there was no credible evidence supporting the alleged bribery scheme. AGENCIES

K'taka sharpens global innovation playbook

Bengaluru: Karnataka IT minister **Priyank Kharge** chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the state's global innovation strategy ahead of an upcoming diplomatic engagement in New Delhi.

The review focused on strengthening Karnataka's international engagement framework to enable more structured, outcome-driven collaborations with global innovation ecosystems.

A key focus area was expanding the state's Global Innovation Alliance (GIA) initiatives, aimed at improving market access for startups, fostering international collaborations and strengthening Karnataka's position as a global innovation hub. The department is working to scale inbound and outbound programmes to help startups access global markets through structured bilateral and multilateral engagements. TNN

Global markets climb on ceasefire news, Bitcoin up

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Global markets were on a tear on Wednesday after the US and Iran agreed to temporarily cease armed conflicts in the Persian Gulf region with Iran agreeing to open the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important shipping channels crucial for the export of crude oil and natural gas from the region to around the world.

Japan—that meets most of its fossil fuel energy needs from imports for the Persian Gulf region—saw its Nikkei index close 5.4% up while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index rose 3.1%. In mainland China the Shanghai Composite index closed 2.7% up while in Pakistan, the KSE 100 index on the Karachi Stock Exchange surged more than 8% or 14,000 points in intra-day trades, its biggest single-day points gain in history.

RELIEF RALLY, OIL SLIDES
KEY MKT MOVES (% CHG)

Dax	▲5
BSE Sensex	▲3.9
Hang Seng	▲3.1
Nasdaq Composite	▲2.8
Shanghai SE	▲2.7
Dow Jones	▲2.6
FTSE 100	▲2.5
Rupee vs $	▲0.5
US Dollar Index	▼0.9
Spot Gold	▲2.1
Brent Futures	▼16.2

Source: Bloomberg, LSEG
Data as of 2130 IST on April 9

In Europe, FTSE in the UK closed 2.5% up while in Germany the Dax index closed 5.1% higher. Across the Atlantic, in mid-session, the Dow Jones index on Wall Street was up 2.6%, the S&P 500 was higher by 2.4% while the Nasdaq Composite was up 2.9%. And in South America, iBovespa in Brazil was trading 2.3% higher.

The feel-good rally was fuelled by expectations that the biggest energy crisis in history would probably be over soon and slowly the supply chains for crude and natural gas would be restored to the pre-war status. As a result, Brent crude prices had crashed over 13% in late trades Wednesday while WTI crude was down over 16% and natural gas nearly 6%. The day's session also saw Bitcoin jump nearly 5% to near the $72K mark by mid-session trades in the US on the back of news that ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz would need to pay Iran in cryptocurrencies.

In GIFT city's international exchange run by NSE, the GIFT Nifty, however, was down marginally at 23,970 points in the closing session of the day after news came in that Iran had blocked passage of ships through the Strait after Israel violated the ceasefire.

Zoho FY2025 income rises 21%, profit dips

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Software firm Zoho registered a 21% increase in total income for the 2024-25 financial year, even as profit dipped slightly due to higher expenses, particularly employee costs.

Total income rose to Rs 13,544 crore from Rs 11,193 crore in FY24, according to regulatory filings sourced via Tofler. Revenue from operations grew to Rs 12,312 crore from Rs 10,456 crore a year earlier. Net profit stood at Rs 3,191 crore, marginally lower than Rs 3,299 crore in the previous year.

Expenses increased sharply to Rs 9,216 crore from Rs 7,061 crore. Employee benefit costs remained the largest component, rising to Rs 4,347 crore from Rs 3,372 crore.

Separately, Zoho is working with the central govt on large-scale digital infrastructure projects. Around 16.6 lakh official email accounts across ministries and departments have been migrated to a cloud-based platform operated by Zoho.

Stripe appoints Maheshwari as India revenue, growth head

Bengaluru: Stripe has appointed Manish Maheshwari as head of revenue and growth for India, as the payments firm sharpens its focus on helping India-based companies scale globally. Maheshwari brings over two decades of experience across internet, technology and startups. He previously served as managing director of Twitter India and later as senior director for new markets entry at the company in the US, where he worked on expanding the platform's global footprint.

He has also held leadership roles at Flipkart, where he led the seller ecosystem, and at Intuit, where he worked on mobile and emerging market initiatives. TNN

Re takes note of crude decline, gains 48 paise

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The rupee strengthened on Wednesday to close at 92.58 against US dollar, up 48 paise from its previous close of 93, after touching an intra-day high of 92.5, as a sharp fall in global oil prices following a US–Iran ceasefire improved risk appetite.

The currency gained as crude prices dropped after the ceasefire and reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, which supported emerging market currencies, including the rupee, while easing concerns on inflation and growth. Market participants said sentiment has improved, but uncertainty persists on whether the ceasefire will hold and whether oil prices will sustain lower levels. Forex traders said investor sentiment also got a boost after RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra said recent steps on forex do not constitute a structural change.

"The key trigger has been a sharp fall in crude oil prices, which have corrected nearly 13–15% towards the $95–96 range, reducing pressure on India's import bill. This easing in oil prices has provided significant relief to the rupee, as lower energy costs improve macro stability. However, sustainability of the move depends on how long the ceasefire holds and proper normalisation of supply through the Strait of Hormuz is ensured," said Jateen Trivedi, analyst with LKP Securities.

Near-term, support is seen around 93.25, while resistance is placed near 92.10.

"The dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of six currencies, declined 0.9% to 98.90. According to RBI's bi-annual monetary policy report, crude oil prices are projected to average $85 per barrel and the rupee is expected at 94 against dollar in FY27.

RBI clean chit for HDFC, board roles to be refined

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Reserve Bank of India has dismissed suggestions of governance lapses at HDFC Bank, even as it moved to redraw the contours of bank board oversight, steering them away from operational minutiae and towards policy and risk.

The reassurance followed scrutiny of board proceedings and supervisory records. Responding to remarks by former chairman Atanu Chakraborty, who had resigned citing a role inconsistent with his "values and ethics", governor Sanjay Malhotra said: "I would like to reiterate that at no point during our supervision or after examining their records did any governance or conduct-related material issue come to our notice. Under our regular supervision, board minutes are also reviewed. Copies of the minutes are provided to us."

Directors are to concentrate on how institutions manage risks and oversee exposures to related entities like subsidiaries

The clarification came alongside a draft circular, effective from Sept 2026, that tightens the remit of bank boards. Directors are to concentrate on how institutions manage risks, oversee exposures to related entities such as subsidiaries, and ensure adherence to corporate governance standards. Several prescriptive requirements on items to be placed before boards will be scrapped in an attempt to reduce clutter and sharpen focus.

In their place, the regulator proposes a more ordered framework where key policies and agenda items will be catalogued separately, routine responsibilities will be delegated to committees or senior management and boards will reserve their approval for material changes rather than incremental adjustments. Accountability, however, will remain undiluted, with boards retaining ultimate responsibility for performance and decision-making.

Boards will determine which matters merit their sanction, the nature of information required from management, and the frequency of review.

The chairperson will set the agenda, while directors are expected to ensure that information is both sufficient and relevant, with the option to commission external assessments where necessary.

India sees strong data centre expansion

Veena.Mani@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: India's data centre sector is scaling up rapidly, driven by hyperscalers, cloud adoption and AI-led workloads, making it one of the most capital-intensive yet high-yielding segments of digital infrastructure.

The country added 387 MW of capacity in 2025, more than double the 191 MW added in 2024, marking a 103% year-on-year increase, according to Savills India. Demand remained strong, with absorption rising to 427 MW from 407 MW a year earlier. Total operational capacity reached about 1,520 MW, up from 1,132 MW in 2024.

Demand is largely led by hyperscalers, which account for about 33% of capacity, while enterprise demand contributes 8% and the rest comes from mixed-use facilities. "Unlike other asset classes in real estate, data centres at their core are an IT business. They provide technical solutions to manage and process large quantum of data digitally... it may not fit in for real estate developers to evaluate it end to end," said Srihari Srinivasan of Savills India.

India's data centre capacity is projected to exceed 4 GW by 2030, implying a CAGR of around 23%, with annual additions expected to rise to 350–450 MW between 2026 and 2030. Industry executives see even higher potential. "We may need nearly 20 times the current capacity over the next five to seven years," said Amit Sarin, MD, Anant Raj Ltd.

CAPACITY RACE HEATS UP

City	Absorption in 2025	Absorption in 2024	Supply in 2025	Supply in 2024
Ahmedabad	1 (0.5%)	10 (2%)	–	1 (1%)
Chennai	87 (20%)	41 (10%)	72 (19%)	105 (55%)
Bengaluru	32 (8%)	4 (1%)	22 (6%)	–
Delhi-NCR	53 (12%)	6 (2%)	79 (20%)	–
Mumbai	209 (49%)	216 (53%)	132 (34%)	54 (28%)
Hyderabad	6 (1%)	55 (14%)	–	13 (7%)
Pune	1 (0.5%)	41 (10%)	54 (14%)	18(9%)

India added **387 MW** of capacity in 2025, more than double in 2024

Source: Savills India Research

Mumbai remains the dominant hub with 49% of absorption, followed by Chennai (20%) and Delhi-NCR (12%). Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Pune are emerging markets, while tier-II cities such as Visakhapatnam, Jaipur and Kochi are gaining traction through edge data centres supporting low-latency use cases.

The business, however, is capital-heavy. Colocation infrastructure costs around Rs 26 crore per MW, excluding land, while cloud-layer investments add about Rs 100 crore for IT infrastructure. Power, cooling and building requirements form the bulk of costs, with AI workloads pushing expenses higher. "Land is only a small part of the total cost; power and cooling infrastructure dominate capex," Srinivasan said.

Players with land banks or integrated capabilities have an advantage, with Anant Raj estimating up to 30% cost savings. Returns remain attractive, with EBITDA margins of up to 70%, payback periods of five to seven years and rental yields 20–30% higher than office assets.

Investor interest remains strong, backed by long-term contracts with hyperscalers and enterprises, especially in BFSI and technology sectors. India has attracted over $125 billion in data centre investment commitments and is expected to cross $180 billion by 2026.

New pension option helps seniors pay hospital bills

Bengaluru: Rising healthcare costs and low insurance penetration among India's elderly are prompting policymakers to rethink retirement savings, with the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) piloting a model that allows limited access to pension funds for medical needs.

Healthcare costs are projected to grow 11.5%–14% in 2026, significantly outpacing inflation. At the same time, over 10% of India's population is already in the senior citizen bracket, with a large section uninsured, PFRDA chairman Sivasubramanian Ramann said. Against this backdrop, the regulator on Wednesday launched the second proof of concept of 'NPS Swasthya', a scheme that allows National Pension System (NPS) subscribers to withdraw up to 25% of their retirement corpus for medical expenses, while also offering a bundled top-up health insurance cover.

The move marks a shift from traditional retirement structures in India, where pension funds are largely locked in until maturity despite high out-of-pocket healthcare spending.

The three-month pilot is being executed with partners including Tata Pension Fund, Axis Pension Fund and Aditya Birla Health Insurance. Feedback from an initial cohort of about 2,000 users will help determine a broader rollout.

Executives said the product aims to balance long-term savings with immediate healthcare needs.

"NPS Swasthya is unique as it offers hospitalisation cover of up to Rs 30 lakh at a cost of under Rs 10 per day," said Sumit Shukla, managing director and chief executive officer, Axis Pension Fund. A key component is its technology layer, with Medi Assist providing the digital infrastructure for fund access and claims processing through an integrated platform. Its network spans over 15,500 hospitals across more than 1,200 cities, enabling cashless inpatient care.

—**Abhishek Tanwani, Srinivas Sriram**

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD.

O/o CE (Civil), 7th floor, LIC Jeevan Deep Building, Lal Kothi, Jaipur

E-TENDER NOTICE: TN-01 (RVU2627WLOB00051)

Online Tenders are invited for "Construction of 66 nos. R-3 types quarters with development works at STPS & SSCTPP Colony, Suratgarh. Tender details are available on websites **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** (for e-tender), **www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvunl & www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in.**

Raj.Samwad/C/26/446 RVUN/PR-4375 Chief Engineer (Civil)

RAIL COACH FACTORY KAPURTHALA

On-line bids are invited by PCMM/RCF on behalf of President of India for the following item(s):-

Sr.No.	Tender No. & Due Date	Brief Description	Qty.(Nos/Sets)	EMD(₹)
1.	02261117/04.05.2026	Harness of LHB EOG Non-AC LSCN Coaches with FDB on Cabin Side Area Only	–	2000000/-
2.	17261018/27.04.2026	Design, Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Interior Furnishing Items of One Rake Set for HS-Spart Rake Configuration Consists of 04 Coaches	2 Sets	10,51,720/-
3.	02261116/04.05.2026	Harness of LHB EOG Non-AC LSCN Coaches with FDB on Cabin Side Area Only	–	2000000/-
4.	12261045/28.04.2026	Wider Window For LHB SCN Coaches (Size 1460 x 700, With Sliding Shutters), As Per Drawing : LS54124 Alt e To PL Number - 33560390	1370 Nos.	4,30,020/-
5.	05261208/04.05.2026	INTEGRATED WTCC PL No. 33556210	153 Nos.	216650/-
6.	05261209/04.05.2026	Set of END Construction for Memu/TC/3PH Coach PL No. 30988810	40 Set	182660/-
7.	05261207/04.05.2026	Set of Integrated WTCC & Suport Assly For LHB 455 Ltrs	208 Set	594750/-

1. For details and making On-line bids, visit Website **http://ireps.gov.in** Drawings/specifications, wherever required can be downloaded from RCF Website **http://www.rcf.indianrailways.gov.in. Class IIIb digital signature certificate required for on-line bidding, can be obtained from licensed certifying agencies listed at website http://www.cce.gov.in. 2.** All Limited tenders and Advertised tenders will normally close at 11:25 Hrs and 14:25 Hrs respectively on the stipulated date and will be opened at 11.30 Hrs and 14.30 Hrs. **3.** Tenders at **Sr. No. 1 to 7** will be opened at RCF, Kapurthala **4.** For queries contact IREPS Helpdesk at 011-24102855, 011-24105180 or RCF Helpdesk at 011-23378658. **NOTE:** "GST No. of RCF is 03AAAGM0289C1ZT. All the suppliers are advised to quote this in dispatch documents for the supplies made by them". **PCMM**

CORRIGENDUM: **Tender No. (1) 17261125** Due on 29.04.2026 for Procurement of Set of Seat and Berth For L.H.B. SLR Amrit Bharat Coaches, regarding Special Conditions may be read as **attached as Annexure A. Tender No. (2) 05251643** for Procurement of Set of Under Frame Items for LHB SCN Coaches. **Due date may be read as 23.04.2026** Instead of 02.04.2026. **Tender No. (3) 17261004**, **Due date may be read as 17.04.2026** Instead of 07.04.2026. **Tender No. (4) 17261006 Due date may be read as 17.04.2026** Instead of 07.04.2026 and in Drawings instead of existing, to be read as Additional Drawings Added. **Tender No. (5) 17261135 Due on 20.04.2026,** Description may be read as Modified under P.L. No. 33693390. **PCMM**

R.O. No. 004-S/2026-27 Dated : 08.04.2026

Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Ltd.

Gandhi Block, SwasthyaBhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur-302005 (Raj.)
Phone No: 0141-2228066, 2228064, Website: http://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in
E-mail :edpssrmsc@rajasthan.gov.in

Ref. No. : F.02 (209)/RMSCL/Proc./S&S (MD)/NIB-17/2025/974 Dated :- 06/04/2026

Corrigendum -I in NIB-17/2025

In Reference to NIB No. Ref. No.: F.02 (209)/RMSCL/Proc./S&S/NIB-17/2025-26/ 927 Dated:- 18.03.2026 UBN No. MSC2526GLRC00096 Corrigendum-I is issued Deletion of items from bid document. All details may be seen on **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in & https://www.rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in.**

Executive Director (Proc.) RMSCL

Raj.Samwad/C/26/438

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, संभाग–द्वितीय उदयपुर, मुख्यालय बाँसवाड़ा

क्रमांक : डी–17 दिनांक :– 02.04.2026

अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना संख्या–01/(EPC Mode) / 2026-27
NIB Code :-

पुल निर्माण कार्य हेतु इच्छुक संवेदको से ऑनलाईन माध्यम से दिनांक **20.04.2026, सायं 06:00 बजे** तक निविदा आंमत्रित की जाती है। निविदा का अन्य विवरण वेबसाईट (http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in और http://www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in) पर देखा जा सकता है। उपापन की कुल अनुमानित लागत राशि रू. **Rs. 4825.00 Lacs** है।

Sd/-
(भैरूलाल भेणिया)
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता,
सा.नि.वि. संभाग द्वितीय उदयपुर, मुख्यालय बाँसवाड़ा

UBN–: PWD2627WLOB00104

DIPR/C/6548/2026

BRIC NIBMG

An Autonomous Institute Under Govt. Of India Ministry of Science and Technology Dept. of Bio Technology

BRIC-NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BIOMEDICAL GENOMICS

P.O.- NSS KALYANI, DIST.- NADIA, WEST BENGAL PIN-741251

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

NIT No. NIBMG/2026-27/001 (CPP ID. 2026_NIBMG_834404_1) Dt. 07.04.2026

The BRIC-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (BRIC-NIBMG), Kalyani, West Bengal, invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from eligible and experienced agencies for the structural establishment and infrastructure development for Establishment of Bio-Incubation Facility within its campus at Kalyani, West Bengal.

The EOI aims to identify competent agencies capable of undertaking design, civil construction, laboratory infrastructure development, and turnkey execution of a modern bio-incubation facility compliant with national and international standards. Interested bidders may please visit the Institute website : **www.nibmg.ac.in** & **https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app** for downloading the EOI documents and other details. The below mentioned QR code may be scanned for details.

Last date for submission of EOI is **29/04/2026 [04:00PM]**

Director

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001.
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813:
Website: www.pspcl.in (Contact No. 96461-22185)

Tender Enquiry No. 377/SSD-168/S-I/2026 **Dated:** 07.04.2026

Dy. CE/Substation Design/ TS Organization, C-1 Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender for manufacturing, testing and supply of 25 nos. 25/31.5 MVA 66/11KV Power Transformers. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification, please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 09.04.2026 (11:00 AM onwards).

Note: Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C 469/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2026-27/10270

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tendering Notice No.: 2026-April-01 **Dated:** 06.04.2026

E-TENDERING NOTICE

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering), North Central Railway Agra for and on behalf of the President of India invites "Open Tender" through on Line only (E-Tendering) for the following works. The details of the tender are as under:-

S.No.: 1	**Tender No.:** 2026-April-01-01	**Approx. Cost (Rs.):** ₹ 23455930.59
Description of work: BFP- Development of store facilities at SSE/PW/N/AGC office.		
S.No.: 2	**Tender No.:** 2026-April-01-02	**Approx. Cost (Rs.):** ₹ 12828574.45
Description of work: Improvement to colony road, approach road to RCC OHT & RPF barrack & mehtab bagh to qtr no. 14/T at JAB under jurisdiction of SSE/W/IDH under ADEN/HQ/AGC.		
S.No.: 3	**Tender No.:** 2026-April-01-03	**Approx. Cost (Rs.):** ₹ 12864717.32
Description of work: Misc. Pway work for SSE(P.Way)AA under ADEN-HQ, Agra		
S.No.: 4	**Tender No.:** 2026-April-01-04	**Approx. Cost (Rs.):** ₹ 8678184.71
Description of work: Sale of abandoned quarters and service buildings on as is where is basis including wood, iron & ferrous material and other serviceable materials including disposal of unserviceable materials as directed by Engineer in-charge in IDH.		
S.No.: 5	**Tender No.:** 2026-April-01-05	**Approx. Cost (Rs.):** ₹ 58168015.67
Description of work: Creation of Divisional Stores Depot at Agra Division.		

For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website **"www.ireps.gov.in"**. Tenders can only be submitted through web portal **"www.ireps.gov.in"** up to **15.00 hrs** on **27.04.2026.** **751/26(A)**

North central railways | @CPRONCR | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED

(Wholly owned Government of Karnataka undertaking)
(CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)

NOTIFICATION INVITING TENDER (NIT)

(Through KPP portal)

Name of work: Inviting Tenders for Appointing Project Management Consultant (PMC) for Construction Supervision & Monitoring of works with Quality and Quantity Assurance, Quality Inspection of Materials, Verification & Certification of Bills, Assessment of Progress of works and Pre & post analysis of capex works in **Ramanagar, Kolar & Bangalore rural circles in BRAZ, Davanagere & Tumkur circles in CTAZ and South & West circles in BMAZ(South), BESCOM.**

Sl. No	Name of Circle	Enquiry No's
1.	Ramanagara Circle	BESCOM/2025-26/SE0409/Call 2
2.	Kolar Circle	BESCOM/2025-26/SE0410/Call 2
3.	Bangalore Rural Circle	BESCOM/2025-26/SE0411/Call 2
4.	Davanagere Circle	BESCOM/2025-26/SE0412/Call 2
5.	Tumkur Circle	BESCOM/2025-26/SE0413/Call 2
6.	South Circle	BESCOM/2025-26/SE0442/Call 2
7.	West Circle	BESCOM/2025-26/SE0443/Call 2

Time Schedule: 1) Availability of Bid documents **10.04.2026** onwards. 2) Last date for Bid submission **21.04.2026** at **15:00 Hrs.** 3) Opening of Technical Bids: **22.04.2026** at **15:00 Hrs.** 4) Pre-Bid Meeting: **15.04.2026** at **12:00 Hrs.** 5) Venue: **Conference Hall, 3rd Floor, BELAKU BHAVANA, Corporate office, BESCOM, K.R Circle, Bengaluru-560001.**

The bid documents can be downloaded and necessary assistance can be obtained through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP) from the Website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

KPP Portal Help Desk:Phone No: +91 9240214000/ +91 924021-4001/ +91-8046010000/ +91-8068948777 E-mail: support@eprochelpdesk.com

Aspiring bidders needs to be registered on Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP). Bidders can take the assistance from the KPPP during office working hours.

For any BESCOM related Complaints Call: 1912
Please Download BESCOM Mitra Mobile App

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Electy), Projects, BESCOM

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India BOI

Head Office, IT(Governance & Excellence) Department, Star House-3, PNB-BOI Tower, C-29, G Block, 10th Floor, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai-400051.
E-mail: HOIT.G&E@bankofindia.bank.in

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR

Procurement of Network Switches and Facility Management Services.
vide Ref. No.: HO:IT(G&E):RFP:Switches:2025-26:1468 Dated: 31.03.2026.
GeM Bid No. GEM/2026/B/7404775 Dated 01.04.2026

The captioned RFP is available on Bank's corporate website www.bankofindia.bank.in under "Tender" section & GeM portal.
Subsequent changes if any, will henceforth be uploaded on the Bank's website & GeM portal.
The last date of submission: 22.04.2026

INLAND WATERWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

(Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Govt. of India)
A-13, Sector -1, Noida – 201301 (U.P.)
Phone No. – 0120- 2527667, 2543931

SAGARMALA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender No.: IWAI-15012/1/2025-Hy

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) invites online bids/tenders from experienced, reputed contractors for O&M and Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) of RIS Stations under Phase-II (Farakka to Patna) in NW-1. The details and tender document can be downloaded from 09.04.2026 to 30.04.2026 from our website 'www.iwai.nic.in' and CPPP Portal 'https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app'. Last date for submission of online bids is 30.04.2026 up to 15:00 hrs and date of opening of tender is on 01.05.2026 at 15:30 hrs. Submission of online bids will be through https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.

Hydrographic Chief

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India BOI

Head Office, IT(Governance & Excellence)Department, Star House-3, PNB-BOI Tower, C-29, G Block, 10th Floor, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai-400051.
E-mail: HOIT.G&E@bankofindia.bank.in

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR

Request for Proposal For Procurement, Installation & Commissioning and Support of VSATs on Rental Basis (Opex Model) for Domestic Branches/Offices.
vide Ref. No.: BOI/HO/IT(G&E)/VSAT/RFP-01/2026 Dated: 02.04.2026
GeM Bid No. GEM/2026/B/7410639 Dated 02.04.2026

The captioned RFP is available on Bank's corporate website www.bankofindia.bank.in under "Tender" section & GeM portal.
Subsequent changes if any, will henceforth be uploaded on the Bank's website & GeM portal.
The last date of submission: 23.04.2026

RAJASTHAN SAMWAD

Department of Information and Public Relations, Government Secretariat, Jaipur-302005
(Telephone & Fax No. 0141- 2227325, E-mail id :- eproc.dipr@gmail.com, dipr.rajasthan@gmail.com)

NOTICE INVITING BIDS

NIB No. 75 Date : 08/04/2026

Bids for Empanelment of Agencies/Firms for Providing Outdoor Media Services for All Rajasthan are invited from interested bidders up to 03:00 PM Dated 22/04/2026. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (**http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in**) of the state; and **https://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in/**. The approximate value of the Procurement is Rs. 40 Crore.

UBN : IPR2627SLRC00001
Raj.Samwad/C/26/523

Managing Director
Rajasthan Samwad, Jaipur

K-RIDE
RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (KARNATAKA) LIMITED

(A Joint Venture of Govt. of Karnataka & Ministry of Railways)

Regd. Office: Samparka Soudha, 1st Floor, Opp. Orion Mall, Dr. Rajkumar Road, Rajajinagar 1st Block, Bangalore - 560010. Email ID- dgm@kride.in

No. K-RIDE/HR/195/Vacancy Notification/05/2026 Date: 07.04.2026

Vacancy Notice No. 13/2026, 14/2026, 15/2026, 16/2026, 17/2026 & 18/2026

K-RIDE, a JV of Govt. of Karnataka & Ministry of Railways, executing the **BANGALORE SUBURBAN RAIL PROJECT & RAILWAY DOUBLING PROJECTS,** & other Railway doubling projects invites applications for the following posts on Deputation/Contract basis.

Vacancy Notice No.	Name of the post	No.of Posts	Grade
13/2026	General Manager (Electrical)	01	E8
14/2026	General Manager (Signalling & Telecommunication)	01	E8
15/2026	Addl. General Manager/ Jt. General Manager (Signalling & Telecommunication)	02	E7/E6
16/2026	Manager/Dy Manager/ Asst. Manager (Civil)	03	E2/E1/ E0
17/2026	Asst. Manager (Rolling Stock)	01	E0
18/2026	Manager/Dy Manager/Asst. Manager (Signalling & Telecommunication)	03	E2/E1/ E0
	Total	**11**	

Last date for submitting applications is **06.05.2026.**

For detailed eligibility conditions and other details please visit: **https://kride.in/careers-in-k-ride/.**

OIPR/CP/114/Zen/2025-26 Sd/- **GENERAL MANAGER /HR (I/c)**

KridePrm | Kride Bsrp | kride_bsrp | KRIDE,BSRP

कार्यालय विकास अधिकारी, पंचायत समिति, साबला, जिला-डुंगरपुर, राज.

क्रमांक :- प.स.सा./ लेखा/ निविदा/ 2026-27/ 223 दिनांक:- 06.04.2026

ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या :- 01/ 2026-27

राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से निम्नानुसार कार्यो के लिए (राजस्थान सरकार) में उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत संवेदको से निर्धारित निविदा प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया से ऑनलाईन निविदाए आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित लागत	धरोहर राशि (विकास अधिकारी प.स. साबला के नाम)	निविदा शुल्क (विकास अधिकारी प.स. साबला के नाम) रूपये में	प्रोसेसिंग फीस (MD RISL Jaipur के नाम) रूपये में	निविदा ऑनलाईन डाउनलोड/ अपलोड करने की दिनांक	कार्यालय में निविदा शुल्क, धरोहर राशि व प्रोसेसिंग फीस जमा कराने की दिनांक व समय	निविदा खोलने की दिनांक व समय
1	पंचायत समिति साबला एवं अधीनस्थ ग्राम पंचायतों अन्तर्गत पेयजल निर्माण कार्यो हेतु वार्षिक दर संविदा	495.00 लाख	9.90 लाख	2000/-	2000/-	दिनांक 07.04.2026 से दिनांक 28.04.2026 को सायं 04.00 बजे तक	पंचायत समिति कार्यालय में दिनांक 29.04.2026 को दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक	दिनांक 29.04.2026 को दोपहर 03.00 बजे से

निविदा सूचना व शर्तें एवं पूर्व विवरण जानकारी sppp.rajasthan.gov.in व eproc.rajathan.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है। इन निविदाओं में भाग लेने वाले संवेदक निविदा को इलेक्ट्रॉनिक फारमेट में वेबसाइट http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in/ पर ही प्रस्तुत कि जावेगी। किसी भी निविदा को स्वीकार करने एवं बिना कारण बतायें निरस्त करने के समस्त अधिकार सक्षम अधिकारी के पास सुरक्षित है। आर.पी.डब्ल्यू.ए. 100 की समस्त शर्तें मान्य होगी।

UBN No. ZDU2627WSOB00004
NIB Code :- ZDU2627A00004

Sd/-
विकास अधिकारी
पंचायत समिति, साबला

ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು

ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರವರ ಕಚೇರಿ, ಸಯ್ಯಾಜಿ ರಾವ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು-570024. E-mail: ee.environmentmcc@gmail.com

ನಂ: ಹೆಚ್1/ಪವಿ/01/2022-23 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 06.04.2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಪಬ್ಲಿಕ್ ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಮಾತ್ರ

ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ವಿವರ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತಿರುತ್ತದೆ

Tender	No. of Work	Amount (InLakhs)	ಇ-ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಚಾಲ್ತಿಗೆ ಬರುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ	ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ	ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ
			ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11ರ ನಂತರ	ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ರವರೆಗೆ	ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ರ ನಂತರ
Goods Tender	04	100.11	07.04.2026	21.04.2026	22.04.2026
Service Tender	1 to 8	313.31	07.04.2026	21.04.2026	22.04.2026
	9 to 10	871.44	07.04.2026	07.05.2026	08.05.2026
EOI	01	–	07.04.2026	16.04.2026	17.04.2026

ಆರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದು. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರವನ್ನು ಕಚೇರಿ ಸಮಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ಕಾ.ಅ (ಪರಿಸರ) ರವರ ಕಚೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು. **ವಿಶೇಷ ಸೂಚನೆ:** ಮುಂದೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ಸೂಚನೆ / ಬದಲಾವಣೆ / ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿಗಳಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು ಮತ್ತು ಯಾವುದೇ ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು(ಪರಿಸರ)
ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು.

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಮೈಸೂರು/28/ತಿರಡಿ ಸಾಯ/2026-27

32001/29/2627

GOVERNEMNT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
LOWER SUKTEL IRRIGATION PROJECT, BALANGIR, AT- LALTIKRA, DIST:- BALANGIR, PIN-767002.
email-Id- ccelsp@gmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
No.1/2026-27 of CCE, LSP, Balangir

1	Type of work	CONSTRUCTION OF CEMENT CONCRETE PRECAST INTERLOCKING PAVER BLOCK ROAD AND CEMENT CONCRETE DRAIN FOR MAIN ROAD AND BRANCH ROAD AT RR COLONY UCHHABAHAL AND CONSTRUCTION OF LINK ROAD FROM LSIP RR COOLONY KUMIAPALI TO KAPILBAHAL CHHAK.
2	Nos. of works	3 (Three) nos. of packages.
3	Class of Contractor	'B' or 'A' Class Contractor
4	BID identification number	01/2026-27, 02/2026-27 to 03/2026-27 of CCE, LSP, Balangir
5	Estimated Cost	Rs.2,35,38,845/- to Rs.5,29,15,214/-
6	Period of completion	7 (Seven) months for each packages
7	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	08.04.2026 at 10.30 AM to 22.04.2026 upto 05:30 PM
8	Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal	22.04.2026 up to 5.30 PM
9	Date of opening of technical bid	23.04.2026 at 10:30 AM
10	Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Chief Construction Engineer, Lower Suktel Irrigation Project, Balangir, At- Laltikra,Dist- Balangir, PIN-767002

(i) Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal **http://tendersodisha.gov.in.**
(ii) Any corrigendum / addendum/cancellation will be displayed in the Govt. Website only.

Sd/- **Chief Construction Engineer**
Lower Suktel Project, Balangir.
OIPR-32001/32448/1/26-27/0001

32001/34/2627

Deptt.of Water Resources, Government of Odisha
"e" Procurement Notice No. ACEDC-CTC- 01/2026-27

1.	Name of the Work	:	Total **01 (One) no.** Drainage work.
2.	Estimated cost	:	**Rs. 697.72 lakh**
3.	Period of Completion	:	**18 (Eighteen)** months
4.	Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal	:	**From 11.30 hours of Dt. 15.04.2026 to 18.00 hours of Dt. 29.04.2026.**
5.	Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	:	**18.00 hours of Dt. 29.04.2026**
6.	Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid	:	Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Gandarpur, Cuttack- 753003. e-mail id :- **sedrainagecirclectc@gmail.com**

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal of Odisha Government **https://tendersodisha.gov.in**. All information, notices, addendum, corrigendum, cancellation notice etc. if required, will be published in this portal.

Sd/-
Additional Chief Engineer
Drainage Circle, Cuttack
OIPR-32001/32518/1/26-27/0002

32001/33/2627

Deptt. of Water Resources, Government of Odisha
"e" Procurement Notice No. ACEDC-CTC- 02/2026-27

1.	Name of the Work	:	Total **04 (Four) no.** Drainage work.
2.	Estimated cost	:	**Rs. 118.11 lakh to 512.21 lakh**
3.	Period of Completion	:	**11 (Eleven) to 18 (Eighteen)** months
4.	Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal	:	**From 11.30 hours of Dt. 16.04.2026 to 18.00 hours of Dt. 30.04.2026.**
5.	Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	:	**18.00 hours of Dt.30.04.2026**
6.	Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid	:	Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Gandarpur, Cuttack- 753003. e-mail id :- **sedrainagecirclectc@gmail.com**

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal of Odisha Government **https://tendersodisha.gov.in**. All information, notices, addendum, corrigendum, cancellation notice etc. if required, will be published in this portal.

Sd/-
Additional Chief Engineer
Drainage Circle, Cuttack
OIPR-32001/32518/1/26-27/0001

RAJASTHAN MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.

(A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking), Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, Jaipur-302005, India,
Phone No: 0141-2228066, 2228064, Website: www.rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in,
CIN : U24232RJ2011SGC035067, E-mail : edpssrmsc@rajasthan.gov.in

Ref No. : F.02 (211)/RMSCL/Proc./S&S/NIB-07/2026/975 Dated :- 06/04/2026

Notice Inviting E-Bids

E-bids for rate contract cum empanelment for supply of following items are invited from eligible bidders:-

S. No.	Item Name/Description	Ref. No.	UBN	Estimated Value in Rs.	Last Time & Last date for bid submission
1.	Surgical & Sutures Items	F.02 (211)/RMSCL/Proc./ S&S/NIB-07/2026/973 Dated :- 06/04/2026	MSC2627GLRC00002	26.23 Cr.	16.04.2026 Up to 6.00 PM

Other particulars of the bids may be visited on the procurement portal **http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in** and may be downloaded from there.

Executive Director (Procurement) RMSCL

Raj.Samwad/C/26/439

34001/37/2627

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER ELECTRICAL CIRCLE (R&B) NIRMAN SOUDHA BHUBANESWAR

E-mail : seec.bbsr2010@gmail.com
Bid Identification No.S.E.E.C (R&B) 01/2026-27
No 1374 / Date 06.04.2026

The Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for E.I. works which are to be received through online bidding, double cover system as detailed in : https://tendersorissa.gov.in. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from dt.09.04.2026 at 05.00 P.M. to dt.23.04.2026 up to 05.00 P.M. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened dt.24.04.2026 at 11.30 A.M. in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, BBSR
OIPR-34001/34006/1/26-27/0002

34001/6/2627

E-mail ID:cebuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in
cebuildings@rediffmail.com
Tel. (0674)-2391523

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

File No-B-III-Sports-12/2025 Lr. No.- 10498 Bhubaneswar, the 28th Mar., 2026

Invitation for Bids
Bid Identification No. CE-Bldg-I-61/2025-26

1.	The Chief Engineer, Buildings-I, Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the work, "**Construction of Block Level Stadium (with Indoor Hall) in Jharbandh Block under Bargarh District**" as detailed below.		
2.	Nature of work	:	Building Work
3.	No. of work	:	01 No.
4.	Bid Cost.	:	Rs. 10,000/-
5.	Class of Contractor	:	'A' / Special
6.	Availability of Bid Documents in the website	:	From dt.13.04.2026 to 17.00 Hours of dt.02.05.2026.
7.	Date of Opening of Bid	:	Dt.04.05.2026 at 11:30 AM.
8.	The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **https://tendersodisha.gov.in**. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.		

Sd/-
Chief Engineer, Buildings-I, Odisha
OIPR-34001/34117/1/26-27/0001

Prayagraj Mela Authority

Triveni Bhawan, Triveni Bandh, Daraganj, Prayagraj
+91 532 2500775/+91 532 2504011,
maghmela26@gmail.com

The Prayagraj Mela Authority Invites below mentioned bids :-

1. Expression of Interest for Selection of Agency for operations, maintenance of inventories and hosting Aarti at Sangam and Quila Ghat.

The EOI Documents shall be made available on the Uttar Pradesh E-Procurement website https://etender.up.nic.in from Sr. No. 1-09th April 2026 onwards. Interested parties may download/upload their proposal and details regarding the EOI shall be made available on Uttar Pradesh E-Procurement website https://etender.up.nic.in.

Addl. Meladhikari,
Prayagraj Mela Authority,
Prayagraj.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

TAMIL NADU STATE HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY (TANSHA)

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING.

NOTICE INVITING BID.

Notice NO. 05, TANSHA/ OCIC-PH-1 / 2026 / Dated.10.03.2026.

(Republication No.02)

For and on behalf of Governor of Tamil Nadu Bids for the following works is invited by the, Member (Technical), Tamil Nadu State Highways Authority (TANSHA), Chennai-25.

Construction of Four Lane Highway with service roads for **1. Valayakkaranai to Pazhaveri, 2. Pazhaveri to Pulivoy and 3. Pulivoy to Manampathy on the section of Proposed Industrial Corridor of Cheyyar SIPCOT on Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) - 3 works.**

All details regarding the Bid will be available online in the website www.tntenders.gov.in from **11.00 a.m (IST) on 27.03.2026 up to 11.30 a.m (IST) on 27.05.2026.** Any changes / corrections will be intimated in the website only.

DIPR/1826/TENDER/2026

TAMIL NADU STATE HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY
CHENNAI - 25

34001/34/2627

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, DHENKANAL (R&B) CIRCLE, DHENKANAL

Corrigendum to bid identification No. C.C.E.DKL(R&B)17/2025-26

The Bid invited vide Bid Identification No. C.C.E.DKL(R&B)17/2025-26 vide letter No.694 dt. 26.03.2026 has been modified as follows.

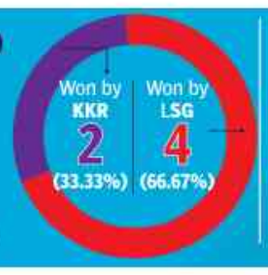
The Bid document for the above notice will be available in the website: **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** from **Dt. 18.04.2026 to 5.00 PM of Dt.02.05.2026** for online bidding and shall be opened at **11.00 AM on Dt.04.05.2026.**

All other terms and conditions of the above tender call notice will remain unchanged.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Dhenkanal (R&B) Circle, Dhenkanal
OIPR-34001/34132/1/26-27/0001

TODAY'S FACE-OFF
KKR vs LSG
TV TIME 7:30 PM
STAR SPORTS / JIOHOTSTAR

PLAYED 6



LAST FIVE MATCHES
KKR NR L L L L
LSG W L L W L

VENUE: KOLKATA

ODDS
KKR 8/10
LSG 11/10

IPL 2026

"FIRST BALL, VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI HITS JASPRIT BUMRAH FOR A SIX AND SETS HIM UP. USUALLY, IT'S BUMRAH WHO SETS UP THE BATTERS. BUT HERE, VAIBHAV SET BUMRAH UP TO BOWL THAT SLOWER BALL ON THE THIRD DELIVERY. HE WAS WAITING FOR IT AND HIT IT FOR ANOTHER SIX."
—Anil Kumble | Former India captain

One-run heartbreak for DC

Great Escape For Titans As David Miller's Brain Fade Leaves Capitals Stranded

Prasanth.Menon@timesofindia.com

Rajesh Mehta

1 Gujarat Titans' one-run triumph is their narrowest victory margin in the IPL.

4 DC have recorded four defeats by one run in the IPL. The other three were vs CSK in 2015, vs Gujarat Lions in 2016 and vs RCB in 2021.

70 **Shubman Gill's** fourth fifty vs DC is his 27th in the IPL. Seventeen of his 27 fifties have been scored by him for GT and ten for KKR.

New Delhi: After having come very close to sealing the match from an almost impossible position, David Miller had a brain fade moment that cost Delhi Capitals the game against Gujarat Titans at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Wednesday night.

With just two runs needed for a win off two balls, Miller refused to take a single after playing Prasidh Krishna's penultimate delivery to fine leg, which would have tied the scores.

Next, his endeavour to pull a win off the final ball failed to materialise as he missed a short delivery from Prasidh. Non-striker Kuldeep tried to rush for the single but he was run out by wicketkeeper Jos Buttler's direct hit as Titans registered their first win of the season by the barest of margins — a solitary run — in an edge-of-the-seat thriller.

Needing 36 to win off the last two overs, the Capitals' chances of winning the game appeared dead and buried. But Miller, batting with an injured hand, produced a late twist by smashing 23 runs of the penultimate over bowled by Mohammed Siraj.

With 13 needed to win off the last over, Vipraj Nigam further raised Capitals' hopes by hitting Prasidh Krishna for a four off the first ball before getting out off the next. Miller then deposited the fourth ball from Prasidh high into the stands, reducing the equation to two of two before the South African's poor thinking cost DC the match.

In a game in which bat dominated ball, it was wily old fox Rashid Khan who proved to be the gamechanger for Titans. With his clever variations of leg-breaks and googlies, Rashid claimed three wickets to halt Delhi. The Rashid show came after the Titans batting triumvirate of Shubman Gill, Jos Buttler and Washington Sundar had set up the match for them with three contrasting half-centuries to power their team to 210/4.

Chasing an imposing target, the Capitals seemed well on their way when openers Pathum Nissanka and KL Rahul gave them a flying start with a 76-run partnership. Rashid's performance also put into shade a sublime batting show from KL Rahul, who showed that class and elegance can co-exist in the T20 format by hitting a classy 92 (52 balls, 11x4, 5x6).

Earlier, the standout knock for Titans came from Buttler (52; 27 balls; 3x4, 5x6). Gill made a well-compiled 70 (45 balls, 4x4, 5x6) while the versatile Washington Sundar fell in the final over for 55.

SCOREBOARD

GT: S Sudharsan b Mukesh 12, S Gill c Rana b Ngidi 70, J Butler b Kuldeep 52, W Sundar c Rana b Mukesh 55, G Phillips not out 14, R Tewatia not out 1; **Extras: (w5, nb1) 6; Total: (4 wkts, 20 ovrs) 210; FoW:** 1-19, 2-79, 3-183, 4-205; **Bowling:** Mukesh 4-0-55-2, Ngidi 4-0-24-1, Axar 3-0-32-0, Kuldeep 4-0-42-1, Natarajan 4-0-34-0, Nigam 1-0-23-0.

DC: P Nissanka c Tewatia b Krishna 41, KL Rahul c Butler b Siraj 92, N Rana c Sudharsan b Rashid 5, S Rizvi b Rashid 0, D Miller not out 41, A Patel c Phillips b Rashid 2, T Stubbs run out Sudharsan 7, V Nigam c Gill b Krishna 12, K Yadav run out 1; **Extras: (w8) 8; Total: (8 wkts, 20 ovrs) 209; FoW:** 1-76, 2-101, 3-101, 4-134, 5-160, 6-166, 7-202, 8-209; **Bowling:** Siraj 4-0-52-1, Rabada 4-0-32-0, Rashid 4-0-17-3, Ashok 3-0-45-0, Krishna 4-0-52-2, Sundar 1-0-11-0.

Result: GT won by 1 run

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
RR	3	3	0	0	2.403	6
PBKS	3	2	0	1	0.637	5
RCB	2	2	0	0	2.501	4
DC	3	2	1	0	0.811	4
SRH	3	1	2	0	0.275	2
GT	3	1	2	0	-0.270	2
LSG	2	1	1	0	-0.542	2
MI	3	1	2	0	-0.715	2
KKR	3	0	2	1	-1.964	1
CSK	3	0	3	0	-2.517	0

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KKR struggle to get house in order

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Kolkata: Even earning the first point in this IPL could not bring a smile on the faces of those in the Kolkata Knight Riders camp.

Despite the one point gained from the washout against Punjab Kings, the 3.4 overs of play on Monday highlighted some added concerns. Struggling to get their house in order, KKR opted to take some bold calls by leaving out Varun Chakravarthy and Sunil Narine. However, the outcome of that decision remained inconclusive, although it is likely that they will be back in action against Lucknow Super Giants at the Eden Gardens on Thursday.

However, another spell of rain is forecast on match day. A washout is unlikely to help the sides, both of whom are trying to get their campaign going.

After losing their first game, LSG did record a victory against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their last match but they made heavy weather of a rather simple chase.

In spite of having a number of power-hitters in their line-up, the team has not really fired on expected lines. Even skipper Rishabh Pant played an uncharacteristic innings, although in a winning cause.

However, both teams are sweating over the form of their overseas batters. Finn Allen and Cameron Green continued to struggle and got dismissed even in some 15 minutes of play on Monday.

The team might play Rovman Powell, who did not get a chance to establish his case in the washed-out game.

LSG's top order too has failed to give the side the right momentum with Aiden Markram, Michell Marsh and Nicholas Pooran yet to fire. On the bowling front, injury issues have hurt both sides before the start of the tournament. While LSG wait on their leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga as he recover from his hamstring injury, KKR are hopeful of getting pacer Matheesha Pathirana soon.

WEATHER
25°C

4 LSG have won all four IPL fixtures while batting first vs KKR — by 75 runs in Pune on May 7, 2022, by two runs at DY Patil, Mumbai, on May 18, 2022, by one run in Kolkata on May 20, 2023 and by four runs in Kolkata on April 8, 2025. KKR's wins have been by eight wickets in Kolkata on April 14 and by 98 runs in Lucknow on May 5, both back in 2024.
—**Stats:** Rajesh Kumar

'Incredible' Sooryavanshi wins first round against Bumrah

Yashasvi Jaiswal Hails RR's Teen Wonder As Opening Duo's Dominance Leads Early IPL Trends

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Yogesh Chawda

"That first delivery from Bumrah which Sooryavanshi hit for six, that's in the slot. That's so rare of Bumrah. So even the great Bumrah is thinking, in the back of his mind, 'Don't get it wrong, because if I do, this guy's going to hit me for six'. If you think like that, more often than not you do get it wrong. After he's hit him for six, Bumrah almost started to laugh afterwards and then go, 'I knew that was going to happen if I got it wrong'. And that's what happened." —Dale Steyn | FORMER SA PACER

Guwahati: It's not just fast bowlers who hunt in pairs. Openers do so too, just like left-handers Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Yashasvi Jaiswal are doing for Rajasthan Royals this season. In Rajasthan's second game against Gujarat Titans, the duo became the fastest Indian opening pair to get to 500 IPL runs, surpassing Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir. They then added 80 runs in 30 balls in the truncated game against Mumbai Indians on Tuesday.

The match itself was billed around Sooryavanshi, all of 15, facing Jasprit Bumrah for the first time ever. Sooryavanshi delivered in style, hitting the talismanic pacer twice over the fence in the first over bowled by Bumrah. The very first ball the Samastipur boy faced off the pacer flew over the long-on boundary and the fourth was nonchalantly dispatched into the midwicket stand. Sooryavanshi had won the first round against arguably the best bowler in the world.

The batter was out after a blistering 39 off 14 balls and was visibly in tears while on his way back to the pavilion but the damage was done by then. Jaiswal, the more experienced partner, carried his bat through the innings, scoring an unbeaten 77 off 32 balls to pile on the agony for MI's bowlers. Talking about their blazing partnerships up front, the 24-year-old Jaiswal said, "It's amazing to bat with Vaibhav. We both like to play our shots, so the way we're playing, we just keep passing positive messages to each other. I've been playing for the last few years, so I just wanted to play according to the situation and give the team the best start."

Giving insights into his mind about Sooryavanshi's duel with Bumrah, Jaiswal further said, "First ball, he hit him for a six and I told him to just keep playing his shots. *Bindaas khel* (chill and play your normal game), I told him. Of course, Bumrah *bhai* is one of the legends, so if Sooryavanshi is scoring against him, it's amazing. It made us feel that we could also take down the other bowlers. So, it was quite good for him to go out and play his shots. That took the pressure off me and then I could take on someone else. It was a good partnership and we enjoyed batting with each other."

Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag termed the pair "the best going around". "Number one opening pair. They have got age on their side. Vaibhav is incredible. It is not one-way slogging. Jaiswal has been doing it for 3-4 years now. The skill they have plus their maturity — they are the best going around," Parag said.

Asked about Sooryavanshi's fearless innings while facing the likes of Bumrah and Trent Boult, Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene said, "We all knew his (Sooryavanshi's) talent from the way he went about it last year. We managed to control him last season. Every match, it's a challenge to contain him. Bumrah probably missed the length a little bit and he was ready for this. It'll be fascinating to see how he evolves."

"It's quite fascinating to see a 17 or 16-year-old (15-year) boy playing the way he played," MI skipper Hardik Pandya said. "We discussed so much about him in our preparation leading up to the game. The way he bats — the kind of fearlessness he has, the kind of shots he plays — it's amazing to see."

Of course, the more experienced Jaiswal, now the leading run-scorer (170) and Orange Cap holder, was the one who ensured victory for the Royals. As Jayawardene said, "Don't forget Jaiswal was the key, the way he batted. He took us on early and batted through the innings."

'SHAMI STILL WILLING TO DEVELOP NEW SKILLS TO PUSH HIS GAME'

Kolkata: Mohammed Shami, 35, is not getting any younger but the pacer's zeal and hunger for improvement has not dimmed, **reports Archiman Bhaduri.**

"You're never too old to learn a new skill," Lucknow Super Giants spin-bowling coach Carl Crowe said while talking about the former India pacer. "It was just four days ago that I saw Shami working on that new ball (variation) that got Abhishek (Sharma) out with our bowling coach Bharat Arun. He's still very willing to develop new skills to try and push his game," Crowe said.

No wonder former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday also backed the pacer for a return to the national team. "Shami should be bowling at the other end of Jasprit Bumrah, nowhere else. That's how good he is," Ganguly said.

'BOWLERS FAILED TO EXECUTE PLAN'

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Guwahati: Despite having clear plans in place for rival openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Mumbai Indians were let down by poor execution in their game against Rajasthan. "We had some plans but we didn't execute them the way we wanted," MI coach Mahela Jayawardene said. "The margins are very small, these guys are batting really well and we knew the dangers. The first four-five overs were crucial. We missed our lengths and lines."

MI skipper Hardik Pandya added: "We did not execute the deliveries we were supposed to. Bowlers need to take responsibility. As a bowling group, we were not up to the mark," said Pandya."

'Important to strive for consistency'

LSG's Aiden Markram Weighs In On Captain Rishabh Pant's Performance, The Real Value Of Having Mohammed Shami In The Side And Why Consistent Strike Rates Can Matter More Than Sixes...

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What do you think of Rajasthan Royals' young opener Vaibhav Sooryavanshi?
It's unbelievable to watch him, to be fair. You try to think back to when I was 15, I think I would have done well to get the ball to the boundary for four. He's walking out in IPL and smacking sixes. He is completely fearless. You acknowledge it, respect it. I'm sure he's going to have a huge future ahead of him and he's going to have a lot of us cricket fans glued to the TV.

TOI Exclusive

Kolkata: Lucknow Super Giants' Aiden Markram isn't the kind of a batter who will go out there and start smacking sixes. He goes about his job without much flourish but delivers what is required. Excerpts from a conversation with South Africa's white-ball captain...

LSG have three players who have led their national sides in you, Nicholas Pooran and Mitch Marsh. Does captain Rishabh Pant bounce off ideas with you?

Yes, he does. It's always a fine balance because it's his team and he wants to do it his own way, which is important. The nice thing is whenever there's a bit of uncertainty or he is in need of an opinion, he liaises with myself, Mitch, Nikki, obviously (strategic advisor) Kane Williamson.

Pant seems to be in good form...

Any team that has Rishabh firing is a better team. He's an absolute entertainer with serious abilities. He always wants to lead from the front. He's got a lot of pride in his performance. You can't keep a good player down for too long.

Unlike last year, LSG doesn't have any injury problems this time...

Definitely better than last year. We've seen really good things from the pace attack in the first two games. Obviously pacer (Mohammed) Shami joining with his ability and experience is huge.

Shami was brilliant in the last game...

There's no one really like him. To have him in the team and also have him sharing that knowledge with some of the younger pacers like Prince Yadav and Mayank (Yadav) is invaluable.

You've evolved as a T20 player...

It was more about understanding my role. You have a lot of guys now playing T20 cricket that are able to hit sixes from the first ball. My way of doing things might look a bit different. Still playing Test cricket, you can't develop the technical side of the T20 game. I have to work with what I have and that's more about trying to hit good cricket shots and trusting that that'll work on the day. So there might be a few less sixes but if I can still strike at the required rate, that makes me happy.

You're known to be very calm. Have your ever lost your cool on the field?

Of course. You're only human. I guess over a period of time, if you're not performing, you get very frustrated. It did happen when I was a bit younger. Over time, I've settled down. I remember having conversations with Hashim Amla about it and he just said that cricket is one of the reasons we live, but not the only reason. Trying to be consistent, whether you're doing well or not, is important as a human being. That's sort of now what I strive towards managing.

Would you call the 136 in the WTC final your most defining knock?

It'll go down as one of the coolest days of my life. The emotions were a roller-coaster for both teams and naturally we were chasing that first trophy. To have done it at a place like Lord's, with our friends and family around, it was special. It's a memory that will live with me forever.

Ayush stuns China's Li; Sindhu, Prannoy advance

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TOI

TOP-NOTCH: Ayush Shetty

Twenty-year-old Ayush Shetty stunned Asian Games gold medallist Li Shi Feng of China 21-13, 21-16 in the first round of the Badminton Asia Championships in Ningbo, China on Wednesday.

While HS Prannoy and PV Sindhu also won their first round matches, Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth bowed out of the tournament.

Prannoy beat Nguyen Hai Dang of Hong Kong 24-22, 21-12 and Sindhu rallied to defeat Wong Ling Ching of Malaysia 15-21, 21-11, 21-19.

Top-ranked Indian Lakshya suffered a 12-21, 19-21 loss to Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong, his fourth defeat to Lee in six meetings.

World No.25 Ayush was in full flow against Li. The Chinese shuttler started with a 3-0 lead but Ayush soon made it 11-9. After the break, Ayush won four consecutive points, involving his experienced rival in long rallies. The Indian took control by moving from 15-12 to 18-12 and closed out the game with a diving retrieve.

Li started the second game with a 4-1 lead and was up 12-9. Ayush erased the deposit with a body smash, a crosscourt smash and excellent placement. From 13-13, Ayush scored five consecutive points. Li, who won silver and bronze at this meet in the last two years, used his experience to reduce the margin to 16-18. Ayush held his nerve. He played a long rally before winning it with an accurate down-the-line smash. Li misjudged the next one and Ayush closed the contest with a crosscourt smash.

The lanky shuttler will face Chi Yu Jen of Chinese Taipei in the pre-quarterfinals on Thursday. Prannoy will play Weng Hong Yang of China.

BJK Cup: India show rare grit to shock top-ranked New Zealand

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Anushka Kogta

SUPER SHOW: Vaishnavi Adkar won against New Zealand's Aishi Das

New Delhi: Shrugging off an early setback against Thailand, India produced a stirring comeback to blank New Zealand 3-0 and keep their World Group playoff hopes alive at the Billie Jean King (BJK) Cup Asia/Oceania Group I tie here.

Wednesday's action began under pressure for the hosts. Resuming their rain-hit tie against Thailand, India needed a spark but fell short in the decisive singles. Sahaja Yamlapalli, after an impressive recovery from a set down, lost a hard-fought battle 4-6, 6-1, 4-6 to Patcharin Cheapchandej in over two hours.

Though the tie was already decided, Ankita Raina and Rutuja Bhosale salvaged some pride with a 6-3, 6-4 doubles win against Thasaporn Naklo and Peangtarn Plipuech, closing the contest on a positive note. Barely within a couple of hours, India returned to the court for the crucial clash against fancied New Zealand. And this time, they delivered.

Debutant Vaishnavi Adkar set the tone with a composed 6-2, 6-4 victory over Aishi Das. Showing marked improvement from her previous outing, Vaishnavi cut down on unforced errors and played with clarity under pressure. "It was a lesson learned. It was my first match playing in the BJK Cup," she admitted later, reflecting on handling nerves better in her second appearance.

Vaishnavi started strong, dictated rallies with controlled aggression, and held her nerve in a tense finish after Aishi mounted a late comeback. Sahaja, displaying remarkable resilience despite her morning defeat, returned to dominate Valentina Ivanov 6-1, 6-3.

AFI's new regulation curbing athletes' freedom, say experts

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Bengaluru: As the Athletics Federation of India on Wednesday reiterated its stand that athletes should mandatorily obtain its approval before entering into an agreement with a third party and that the decision is to protect the athletes, legal experts slammed the federation's move as "unconstitutional and arbitrary."

"This is akin to mandatorily seeking a blanket prior approval, which is wholly unconstitutional and arbitrary besides being an unreasonable and unlawful restraint on athletes' commercial freedom as also his/her trade or profession. It thus seems to be violative of Article 19(1)(g) (Freedom of Trade or Profession) of the Constitution of India," sports lawyer Rahul Mehra told **TOI**.

"Instead, AFI could have issued advisory guidelines in order to protect the athletes from entering into conflicting or harmful contracts, but to have such a mandatory prior approval is reflective of seeking absolute control over athletes' commercial right and interest," he added.

Critics pointed out that the AFI move could also be aimed at protecting their sponsors. "The new circular seems to have been triggered by long-distance runner Gulveer Singh moving out of Reliance (one of AFI's sponsors) to OGQ to JSW within three months. AFI can support their sponsor but that should not be done by troubling the athletes who are getting individual sponsors," another legal expert said.

Experts also wondered why the AFI should trouble India's top athletes like Neeraj Chopra, asking them to get approval for getting a sponsorship deal. "The value of athletics in India is because of Chopra. It's an attempt to exert some form of control. There is no chance (that it will stand scrutiny in court) as it's a restraint of trade," an expert told **TOI**.

Meanwhile, the AFI said the whole idea is to help the athletes. "This decision has come in the wake of some sponsors drawing AFI's attention. We would like the athletes to focus on their training and competition rather than get caught up in signing contracts," AFI said in a post on X.

SNAP SHOTS

Nitesh clinches silver

Greco Roman wrestlers added a silver and two bronze medals to the country's tally at the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on Wednesday. While Nitesh bagged the silver medal in the 97kg category, Sachin Sahrawat (67kg GR) and Prince (82kg) clinched bronze medals.

India beat Chinese Taipei: The Indian U-20 women's team kept alive their hopes of qualifying for the AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup knockout stage, defeating Chinese Taipei 3-1 in their final Group C match in Pathum Thani, Thailand on Wednesday. Forward Sibani Devi Nongmeikapam (32, 87-pen) scored two goals after Bhumika Devi Khumukcham (26) had put the Young Tigresses in the lead early on.

Pistol shooters disappoint: Indian shooters endured a disappointing outing in the men's 10m air pistol event at the ISSF World Cup in Granada, Spain on Wednesday, with all three shooters failing to enter the final. Mukesh Nelavalli finished 14th with an aggregate score of 579. Ujjawal Malik finished 22nd with a total of 577. Pramod shot 574 to be placed 39th. In the women's 25m pistol event, Rhythm Sangwan shot 292 in the precision round to be placed sixth, while Divya T shot 291 to secure eighth place. Simranpreet Kaur Brar shot 282 to be placed 45th.

Indians begin on a winning note: Indian girls stamped their authority with a 3-0 victory over Sri Lanka, while the boys routed Maldives by a similar margin to begin their campaign in the Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships on a winning note in Shimla on Wednesday. Jennifer Varghese, Ananya Muralidharan, and Prisha Goel registered straight or four-game wins to complete a sweep against Sri Lanka. In the U-15 boys' section, India mirrored that dominance with a 3-0 rout of Maldives in the second round.

Deepika, Savita return: Salima Tete will continue to lead India, while drag-flicker Deepika and experienced goalkeeper Savita make a comeback to the 24-member national women's hockey squad announced on Wednesday for the tour of Argentina later this month. The tour will also see the return of defender Jyoti and forward Mumtaz Khan.

Doha DL moved to June 19: The season-opening Diamond League in Doha, where India's javelin star Neeraj Chopra breached the 90m mark last season, has been scheduled for June 19, the organisers said in a statement on Wednesday. The event was originally scheduled to take place at the Qatar Sports Club on May 8 but has been postponed due to the situation in West Asia.

Wolves down Pacers: Ayo Dosunmu scored 24 points as the Minnesota Timberwolves snapped a three-game losing streak with a 124-104 win over the Indiana Pacers on Tuesday in Indianapolis.

ADVANTAGE BAYERN

Diaz, Kane Shine Against Real; Havertz Powers Arsenal

Luis Diaz and Harry Kane scored the goals that gave dominant Bayern Munich a crucial 2-1 Champions League quarterfinal first leg win away to Real Madrid on Tuesday. Kylian Mbappe's strike 16 minutes from time gave record 15-time winners Real a lifeline at their Bernabeu home in a gripping battle.

Vincent Kompany's side, arguably the strongest team in Europe this season, produced a masterclass in the first half and could have been several goals ahead. Instead they had only one from

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Diaz, which Kane added to after the interval, but Mbappe's goal kept Alvaro Arbeloa's side in the tie.

Bayern should have taken the lead through defender Dayot Upamecano, who fluffed his lines from point-blank range after Kane cushioned the ball into his path.

Despite the Frenchman's ungainly effort at finishing, the ball was still heading for the net but Madrid defender Alvaro Carreras hacked it off the line to safety. Madrid were largely pinned back as

Getty Images

ON TARGET: Harry Kane

Bayern dominated the ball, but the hosts sought to send through rapid strikers Mbappe and Vinicius Junior on the counter. The competition's top scorer, Mbappe, got in first and goalkeeper Manuel Neuer made a solid save with his legs to deny the striker. Vinicius was next but Neuer was equal to his bending strike too, palming the ball away.

Bayern toyed at times with Real, who ceded possession far too often, and their opening goal was a slick combination play which caught the hosts on their heels. After a Vinicius pass deflected off Michael Olise and back to Bayern, they sprang into action.

Gnabry exchanged a one-two with Kane and pushed the ball in behind Trent Alexander-Arnold for the Madrid defender's former Liverpool team-mate Diaz to reach and stroke home past Lunin in the 41st minute.

Kane made an even bigger impact less than a minute into the second half. Olise cut the ball back to him on the edge of the box and Kane fizzed a curling effort into the bottom corner to double Bayern's lead. It was his 11th Champions League strike this season, trailing only Mbappe, and his 49th goal across all competitions.

With Bellingham on as a substitute, Madrid stepped up a level and eventually found the net with Alexander-Arnold making amends for his part in Bayern's opener. The right-back guided a low cross to the far post and this time Mbappe did beat Neuer, smashing home off the crossbar after 74 minutes.

ARSENAL LEAVE IT LATE

Kai Havertz snatched a last-gasp winner as Arsenal bounced back from their domestic distress to steal a 1-0 victory at Sporting Lisbon in the quarterfinal first leg. The Gunners were below their best but they emerged with the win thanks to David Raya's fine saves and Havertz's clinical finish in stoppage-time. **Result:** Real Madrid 1 (Mbappe 74) lost to Bayern Munich 2 (Diaz 41, Kane 46); Sporting Lisbon 0 lost to Arsenal 1 (Havertz 90+1). AGENCIES

Vaishali outplays Divya

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FIDE

Vaishali took her tally of points to 5.5 and now shares the lead with China's 23-year-old and 2578 Elo Zhu Jiner.

Vaishali Rameshbabu exposed Divya Deshmukh's inaccuracy to take the lead with a dominant 31-move win over the women's World Cup winner in Cyprus on Wednesday. In the return leg of the all-India clash, the 2470 Elo Vaishali didn't allow Divya to play a marathon game as the 24-year-old Chennai Grandmaster turned her positional advantage into an impressive victory.

CANDIDATES CHESS

With her white pieces, the lowest-ranked Candidate Vaishali chose the English Opening and offered her rooks on the 23rd and 31st moves to earn a decisive result against 20-year-old Divya.

Judit Polgar, the only woman player to cross a 2700 Elo rating, said in her commentary: "Vaishali came up with three rook sacrifices in one game." With her third victory in nine rounds, Vaishali took her tally of points to 5.5 and now shares the lead with China's 23-year-old and 2578 Elo Zhu Jiner.

In a lopsided result, Zhu opted for the Reti Opening with her white pieces to prevail over GM Kateryna Lagno. The 46-move contest saw Zhu make the most of her extra knight to post her third win.

In the open field, Matthias Bluebaum held runaway tournament leader Javokhir Sindarov to a draw. Praggnanandhaa R failed to utilise his mid-game advantage against Wei Yi to settle for a 56-move draw. At four points Pragg's title hopes are now all but over.

McIlroy chases Masters repeat

AUGUSTA GOLF

Rory McIlroy seeks a historic repeat victory starting Thursday at the 90th Masters, while world number one Scottie Scheffler and Bryson DeChambeau lead a host of challengers in firm and fast conditions. Second-ranked McIlroy completed a career Grand Slam by capturing the green jacket at Augusta National last year, but only Jack Nicklaus, Nick Faldo and Tiger Woods have won back-to-back green jackets, Woods the most recent in 2001-2002. McIlroy suffered an injury scare last month when back pain prompted his withdrawal at Bay Hill. But he competed the following week and has rested since. Scheffler, last year's British Open and PGA Championship winner, has failed in two Masters repeat bids. Scheffler, the 2022 and 2024 Masters winner, has been off for three weeks as wife Meredith gave birth to son Remy on March 27. DeChambeau, who edged McIlroy for the 2024 US Open title, was in the final Sunday group last year at the Masters when the Northern Ireland star made history. AFP

Ideal SA fight back to hold Garuda to a draw

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Ideal Sports Academy came from two goals down to fight out a draw against Garuda Hockey Club 4-4 in the KSHA 'B' Division Hockey League Championship here on Wednesday. Bopanna helped Ideal equalise in the 49th minute, as he ended with a brace while Prathik and Bopanna B contributed a goal each. Garuda's loss of possession towards the final 15 minutes cost them, as Ideal capitalised to overturn a two-goal deficit.

'B' DIVISION HOCKEY

In another fixture, Ashco Hockey Club defeated Bangalore Friends Hockey Club 4-2, with Nithin starring for Ashco with two goals. Govindraj and Naeem also got on the scoresheet. Friends struggled to sound the board after Suresh's opener in the 14th minute, with Naresh Babu's consolation goal in the 56th minute coming too late to inspire a comeback.

Results: Ashco HC 4 (Nithin 16, 53, Govindraj 17, Naeem 48) bt Bangalore Friends HC 2 (Suresh 14, Naresh Babu 56); Ideal SA 4 (Bopanna 20, 49, Prathik 37, Bopanna B 46) drew with Garuda HC 4 (Suresh Babu 15, Hari Krishnan 21, Hari Haran 28, Naveen Kumar 44). —Kaushal Kumar V

Joshi surges ahead

Khalin Joshi shot a second consecutive three-under 68 to move into the lead with a total of six-under 136 after round two of the Andhra Open golf tournament in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. The 33-year-old Bengaluru golfer holds a one-shot lead over overnight leader Dhruv Sheoran, who carded one-under 70 to slip to second spot at five-under 137. S Chikkarangappa also returned a 70 to sit third at four-under 138. PTI

Double win for Mounts

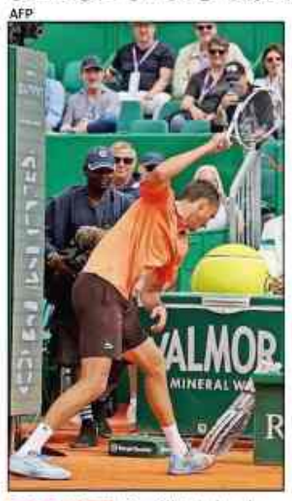
Bengaluru: Mounts Club began on a high as they won both their matches in the State Women's Basketball League championship in Bengaluru on Wednesday. After defeating MCHS 75-46, Mounts strolled past AVBC 49-24.

BASKETBALL

Results: Mounts Club 49 (Sridevi 13, Ananya 10) bt AVBC 24 (Chirantha 8) HT 29-9; Mysore Dist 'A' 61 (Sahana 12) bt Hoop 7 BC 19 (Dhanyashree 11) HT 31-8; Appaiah BC 39 (Moulya 9) bt BCYA 25 (Tharunya 9) HT 19-8; Young Orions 72 (Vyoma 19, Sarayu 17) bt HBR BC 27 (Diya 12) HT 42-12; DYES Vidyanagar 50 (Chaitra 13, Vibha 10) bt Pattabhiram BC 20 (Anagha 6) HT 26-8; Vimanapura SC 56 (Shreya 16, Shwetha 15) bt Dharwad Dist 'A' 16 (Deepika 12) HT 36-10; Vivek's SC 53 (Pavithra 18, Jayashree 13) bt Southern Blues 49 (Anvitha 20, Vibha 10) HT 24-23; Koramangala SC 31 (Saloni 13) bt Kolar Dist 23 (Abhinaya 11) HT 14-11. Mounts 75 (Ananya 22) bt MCHS 46 (Saanvi 20) HT 36-23; Mysore 88 (Sahana 12) bt B'lore Sporting 20 (Vaishnavi 9) HT 39-11; Southern Blues 55 (Diya 15) bt Devanga Union 24 (Shrishti 9) HT 28-14; Appaiah BC 65 (Tia 15) bt Vijayapura 51 (Lalitha 20) HT 32-20; Dharwad 35 (Deepika 20) bt MNK Rao Park BC 23 (Mahima 9) HT 19-12; JSC 58 (Sanjana 23, Aadhya 21) bt Bharath SU 25 (Archana 9) HT 33-12; DYES 45 (Vibha 12) bt YMMA 36 (Tanvi 7) HT 35-13; B'lore Vanguards 59 (Aarushi 18, Tisha 16) bt Kolar Dist 12. HT 35-8. TNN

Medvedev suffers double bagel loss

AFP



SOUR NOTE: Daniil Medvedev smashes his racquet

Daniil Medvedev slipped to an embarrassing 6-0, 6-0 thrashing by Matteo Berrettini in the Monte Carlo Masters second round on Wednesday, as Alexander Zverev dug deep to beat Cristian Garin.

Medevdev completely unravelled against Berrettini after missing two break points in the opening game, making 30 unforced errors and serving five double faults. Medve-

TENNIS

dev did not win more than two points in any of the last 11 games and his frustrations boiled over in the second set, smashing his racquet into the court four times.

Berrettini wrapped up the double-bagel victory, the first such defeat of former world number one Medvedev's career, in just 49 minutes. "I think it was one of the best performances of my life," Berrettini said.

The former Wimbledon runner-up, now ranked 90th, will face Joao Fonseca in the last 16 after the Brazilian teenager beat Arthur Rinderknech 7-5, 4-6, 6-3.

World number three Zverev, who is hoping to complete the set of all three clay-court Masters 1000 titles this week, staged a late comeback to edge out Chilean qualifier Garin 4-6, 6-4, 7-5. The 28-year-old will face unseeded Belgian Zizou Bergs, who downed 2023 champion Andrey Rublev 6-4, 6-1, in round three.

Zverev has not won an ATP title since Munich 12 months ago, while the last of his seven Masters triumphs came in Paris in 2024.

Results: 2nd rd: 11-Jiri Lehecka (Cze) bt Alejandro Tabilo (Chi) 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3; Matteo Berrettini (Ita) bt 7-Daniil Medvedev (Rus) 6-0, 6-0; Joao Fonseca (Bra) bt Arthur Rinderknech (Fra) 7-5, 4-6, 6-3; Zizou Bergs (Bel) bt 13-Andrey Rublev (Rus) 6-4, 6-1; 3-Alexander Zverev (Ger) bt Cristian Garin (Chi) 4-6, 6-4, 7-5. AFP

TIMES NATION

Bangladesh likely to follow court process in Hasina case

▶ Continued from P 1

In a statement, MEA said, "The two sides agreed to explore proposals for deepening the partnership through relevant bilateral mechanisms." It is likely that Dhaka would follow court-mandated processes in the Hasina case, not allowing it to disrupt ongoing efforts for a reset in the relationship. However, the fact that Khalilur called for the extradition of Hasina and her home minister Asaduzzaman Khan — both awarded death penalty by Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal — suggests that the new govt will not be oblivious to the likely effects domesti-

ANI

EAM Jaishankar with his Bangaldesh counterpart Khalilur Rahman (R) on Wednesday. Rahman thanked Indian govt for arresting suspected killers of Hadi

cally of Hasina's continued presence in India.

Khalilur also thanked the Indian govt for arresting the suspected killers of youth Shaheed Osman Hadi: "Both sides agreed that the arrested individuals will be returned to Bangladesh in accordance with the procedures laid out in the extradition treaty between the two countries." Hadi's killing had sparked anti-India protests in the country.

According to Dhaka, Jaishankar told the Bangladesh minister about easing of Indian visas to Bangladeshis, particularly medical and business, in the coming weeks.

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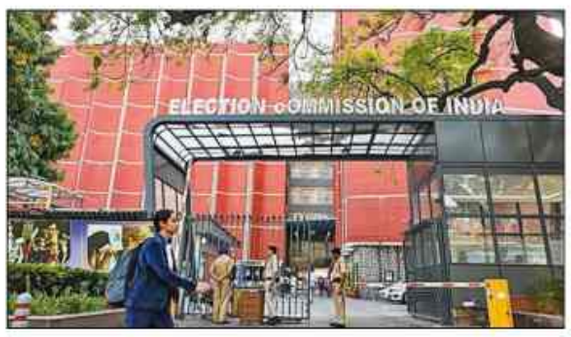
Make meet transcript public, TMC dares EC

▶ Continued from P 1



'Elections must be free from Delhi's control, free from political bias and certainly free from double standards', TMC said in a post on X

Refuting EC's version, TMC challenged it to release the transcript of the meeting. "Is this how a neutral constitutional body is expected to behave? We are also speaking straight to EC in a straightforward manner. This time, elections must be: free from Delhi's control, free from political bias, free from targeted persecution of anyone and certainly free from double standards," TMC said in a post on X.

The parting shots at the end of the meeting from both sides were bitter — CEC, according to TMC, asked the delegation , comprising MPs O'Brien, Sagarika Ghose, Saket Gokhale and Menaka Guruswamy, to "get lost" and O'Brien, according to EC sources, told the CEC that "I hope you will sleep soundly tonight".

EC officials told **TOI** that the meeting started with TMC presenting a memorandum to raise the issue of alleged disenfranchisement of voters during the SIR process. As is the usual practice, the party first fielded its functionary — O'Brien — to talk. He started speaking "in a raised voice and a combative tone", according to EC sources.

Later, addressing a press conference, O'Brien accused EC of not responding to multiple letters written by party chief Mamata Banerjee, as he raised objection to the "motivated" transfers of senior Bengal officers in the run-up to the polls and appointment of "tainted officers". When these objections were raised at the meeting, the CEC's answer was, "get lost", he said. "We were told this within seven minutes of the meeting," O'Brien said.

ED attaches properties worth ₹18cr of Goa nightclub, operator

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Enforcement Directorate has attached properties worth Rs 18 crore of "Birch by Romeo Lane" nightclub at Arpora in Goa, where 25 people were killed in a fire on Dec 6 last year, and its operator Saurabh Luthra. It is looking for other illegal assets of the accused for attachment purposes.

"Probe revealed that the establishment was operated by Being GS Hospitality Goa Arpora LLP without obtaining mandatory statutory approvals, including the requisite fire NoC. The partners had submitted fabricated documents, such as a fake health NoC and forged police clearance certificate, to authorities in order to secure licences and project the establishment as lawfully compliant," ED has said.

It claimed the partners "knowingly continued the commercial operations of the establishment despite the absence and expiry of mandatory licences. Notably, the trade licence had expired on March 31, 2024, and was not renewed; however, the establishment continued to operate in blatant violation of statutory requirements".

The money trail and analysis of transactions of the accused revealed that the establishment had generated total revenue of Rs 30 crore from FY2023-24 to FY2025-26 (Dec 6, 2025), which has been identified as "proceeds of crime".

On Jan 23, ED had conducted searches at multiple premises linked to the entity.

Birch owners get bail in forgery case

A court in Goa's Mapusa Wednesday released brothers Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra, co-owners of the nightclub Birch by Romeo Lane, on bail in connection with a forgery case.

During the probe into the fire tragedy, a separate FIR was registered at the Mapusa police station, accusing the duo of forging a health NOC and using it to obtain an excise licence to run the Arpora nightclub, thereby cheating authorities.

The court, however, held there is no direct material to show the brothers forged the NOC. "The said NOC also prima facie would not create any right in favour of LLP to sell liquor, as same can be carried out only after obtaining permission from excise department," said JMFC Jude Sequeira. TNN

IT co staffer held for colleague's rape in Nashik, 5 for harassment

Nashik: Six employees of an IT company have been arrested, one of them on charges of rape and sexual exploitation of a colleague, and the other five over allegations of sexual harassment and hurting religious sentiments, **reports Santosh Sonawane**.

Nashik police said the company has a workforce of nearly 300 employees and the arrested men are mostly team leaders. Police said a total of nine cases have been registered, including one on a male employee's complaint related to hurting religious sentiments.

ACP (Crime) Sandeep Mitke told **TOI**, "An HR official of the company has been named in one case, as the complainant stated that she had sent him an email reporting the harassment at workplace by the team leaders concerned, but the HR official advised her to 'stay cool as some gestures are common in MNCs'. The HR official has not been arrested so far."

Police said a total of nine cases have been registered, including one on a male employee's complaint related to hurting religious sentiments

Police said the complainant in the rape case — the first of the nine cases, registered on March 26 — said the accused, despite being married, forced her into a physical relationship, falsely promising to marry her. On Wednesday, **TOI** sent an email to the IT major seeking its response, but no reply was received till the time of going to press.

Nashik police commissioner Sandeep Karnik told **TOI** an SIT has been formed to investigate all these case.

ACP Mitke, who is heading the SIT, said, "The complainant in the rape case told police that other women employees were also facing sexual and mental harassment and comments hurting religious sentiments, following which police contacted these women and counselled them to register their complaints."

Welcome all steps that lead to peace and stability: MEA

▶ Continued from P 1

ANI

Randhir Jaiswal, the MEA spokesperson, expressed hope developments in West Asia will encourage peace efforts in Ukraine

As we have continuously advocated earlier, de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy are essential to bring an early end to the ongoing conflict," said MEA in a carefully-worded statement focused more on the outcome than the means used to achieve it. Going a step further, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal expressed hope that developments in West Asia will encourage peace efforts in Ukraine. "India has always been in favour of peace. We welcome all steps that lead to peace and stability," he said.

There was no formal acknowledgement of the key intermediary role played by Pakistan which was credited by both US President Donald Trump and Iran for the breakthrough. However, official sources said India sees the development, which entails a commitment by Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz during the two-week ceasefire, as a potential catalyst for progress in negotiations for long-term peace in the region.

Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif has announced that Islamabad will host talks between the US and Iran beginning April 10. Apart from ensuring the safety and security of the 10-million strong Indian diaspora in the Gulf region, India's foremost priority in the past several weeks had been to secure safe passage for its LPG tankers through the key energy route to prevent supply disruptions.

India, however, will be wary of any negative fallout on its own downgraded ties with Pakistan from greater international legitimacy for Islamabad that the ceasefire could lead to. India maintains that Pakistan is the fountainhead of global terrorism and refuses to engage with Islamabad till it takes tangible and irreversible action against groups responsible for cross-border terrorism.

Trump also hinted after the ceasefire that China too might have played a role in the peace negotiations by urging Tehran to engage with the US. For India, however, despite its close ties with both sides and its status as a vital stakeholder in the Gulf, active mediation was not an option in line with its decades-old disdain for third-party mediation, especially in ties with Islamabad in which it has always emphasised bilateralism.

External affairs minister S Jaishankar touched upon this at an all-party meeting last month where he said India, unlike Pakistan, does not have a history of acting as a go-between between countries. He noted Pakistan's role in facilitating clandestine backchannel talks between the US and China in 1971.

Mohsina Kidwai, Gandhi family loyalist, dies at 94

Shailvee.Sharda @timesofindia.com

Lucknow: Congress veteran **Mohsina Kidwai**, who was a Gandhi family confidante, from Indira Gandhi to Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, passed away on Wednesday at the age of 94 at a Noida hospital. She was laid to rest at the graveyard in Delhi's Nizamuddin area, with Congress MP Rahul Gandhi attending the funeral.

A three-time Lok Sabha member from Azamgarh and Meerut and a former Rajya Sabha member, she also served as a Union minister and held key organisational roles within Congress. In the 1978 bypoll, she won the Azamgarh seat despite a strong anti-Indira wave, recalled party MP Pramod Tiwari.

Mohsina's political career began on Jawaharalal Nehru's suggestion. In Feb 1954, her father-in-law Jameel-ur-Rehman Kidwai, a popular Congress politician in Barabanki, took her to meet Nehru. While blessing her, the then PM asked Jameel: "When are you introducing her to the political world?" The casually tossed question paved the way for her political debut in 1960, and the journey continued for six decades.

In 1976, she was called to Delhi for a meeting with Indira, and was told she had been picked as the new UP Congress chief.

2 get life term for burying woman alive

Prayagraj: A sessions court Tuesday sentenced two men to life imprisonment for burying alive a 75-year-old woman and stealing jewellery and Rs 4.5 lakh five years ago, reports **Rajesh Kumar Pandey**.

In 2021, the convicts, Dheeraj Gupta and Rinku Jaiswal, attacked Vidyawati Gupta.

The prosecution stated Vidyawati lived separately from her sons, making her vulnerable to youngsters who befriended her. They gained her trust and started swindling money, extracting around Rs 4.5 lakh. They also lured her with a gold loan promise and mortgaged her jewellery to a private firm for about Rs 2 lakh. When she demanded her money back, the men felt cornered.

To avoid paying her back, they plotted her murder.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

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INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Chinese President Xi Jinping asks top brass of military to carry out political rectification and remain loyal to ruling Communist Party and Marxist ideology

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TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

WE NEVER REALLY GROW UP, WE ONLY LEARN HOW TO ACT IN PUBLIC
— BRYAN WHITE

MJ BIOPIC 'MICHAEL' UNDERWENT RESHOOTS COSTING $10M OR MORE TO SCRAP ENDING THAT INCLUDED CHILD ABUSE CLAIMS

KEANU REEVES ON CHOOSING ROLES: 'ACTORS FEEL PRESSURE TO TAKE ANY JOB THEY GET, BUT I WOULD NEVER AUDITION FOR SOMETHING I DON'T LIKE'

How Pak Took Centre Stage In US-Iran Truce

Sharif & Munir Reportedly Engaged With Vance & Araghchi To Hammer Out Deal

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: The US-Iran ceasefire breakthrough came not from the UN or traditional European intermediaries, but through intense backchannel parleys by Islamabad, which took centrestage as a mediator.

Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir reportedly engaged US vice-president JD Vance and Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi to hammer out the tentative truce, although President Donald Trump stepped up to take credit.

Trump said that "based on conversations" with the Pakistan PM and field marshal, "and wherein they requested that I hold off the destructive force being sent tonight to Iran, and subject to the Islamic Republic of Iran agreeing to the COMPLETE, IMMEDIATE, and SAFE OPENING of the Strait of Hormuz, I agree to suspend the bombing and attack of Iran for a period of two weeks. This will be a double sided CEASEFIRE!" Trump said about two hours before he had threatened to annihilate a civilisation.

Although President Trump claimed that the reason he is agreeing to a ceasefire is that "we have already met and exceeded all military objectives, and are very far along with a definitive agreement concerning long-term PEACE with Iran, and PEACE in the Middle East (West Asia)," Trump acknowledged receiving a 10-point proposal from Iran, which he said "is a workable basis on which to negotiate".

"Almost all of the various points of past contention have been agreed to between the US and Iran, but a two-week period will allow the agreement to be finalised and consummated," he wrote, even as Iran boasted that it had brought the US to its knees.

Outside of the MAGA faithful, most of the US commentariat too appeared to see Iran coming out on top of the fracas simply by surviving the American onslaught and retaining its stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz, virtually forcing a joint toll collection plan with Washington.

The ceasefire's diplomatic centre of gravity now shifts to Islamabad, where talks are scheduled for Friday. However, Pakistan's role has not been without controversy. Some commentators have suggested that Sharif and Munir effectively acted as "wingmen", helping to broker a pause that allows Trump to step back from earlier threats without appearing to retreat under pressure.

Critics point to the president's previous warnings about overwhelming force — including rhetoric that invoked the destruction of Iranian civilisation — as evidence of an overreach that necessitated a diplomatic off-ramp. In this reading, the ceasefire serves as a face-saving mechanism rather than a negotiated equilibrium.

Social media posts showing the edit history of Sharif's statement suggesting he was posting messages dictated to him spiced up the day's developments. The controversy was rooted in Sharif's post that included the heading: "Draft — Pakistan's PM Message on X". The inclusion of the word "Draft" suggested that the post may not have been intended for public release in its original form. Later, the post was edited, removing the draft label but retaining the core content.

Trump surrogates reject such characterisations, insisting that the pause reflects strength and strategic discipline rather than concession. Yet the optics remain contested, particularly in light of growing commentary around the so-called "TACO" label — "Trump Always Chickens Out" — circulating in political and media circles. While such jibes are not part of formal policy discourse, they underscore the domestic dimension of the narrative battle surrounding the ceasefire.

Adding to the controversy was a flap regarding the authenticity of the Iranian statement issued by Tasnim News Agency (the semi-official voice of the IRGC). The statement, which congratulated the Iranian people on "forcing the criminal America to accept its 10-point plan", and described the truce as conditional and reversible while warning that any violation would be met with a "decisive response", was dismissed by Trump as "fraudulent" and "fake news put out by CNN".

Part of the confusion appears to stem from overlapping — and potentially divergent — signals within Iran's own leadership. Statements attributed to its foreign ministry have struck a somewhat more conciliatory tone, emphasising the importance of dialogue and hinting at readiness for structured talks. This has fuelled speculation about a possible rift between Iran's diplomatic apparatus and the more hardline clerical and security establishment that ultimately holds authority. Trump has repeatedly asserted that there has been a regime change in Tehran and the US is talking to a less radical leadership now.

Israel's position adds another layer of complexity. Officials in Israel have not publicly opposed the ceasefire, but neither have they unequivocally endorsed it while signalling a cautious acceptance contingent on the pause not constraining their ability to act against perceived threats.

At the heart of the upcoming talks in Pakistan are unresolved issues that will determine whether the ceasefire can evolve into something more durable. These include the scope of sanctions relief, the future of Iran's nuclear programme, the role of regional proxies, and security guarantees for maritime traffic. Equally critical will be the question of sequencing — whether confidence-building measures can be agreed upon without either side appearing to yield ground prematurely. Diplomats will be watching for signs of coherence in Iran's position, particularly whether the foreign ministry's tone aligns with that of the broader leadership.

ISLAMABAD'S QUIET COUP

PM Shehbaz Sharif says Pakistan helped secure a US-Iran ceasefire, with talks slated between the two in Islamabad on Saturday

WHY PAK AND IRAN WORK

Pakistan shares 900-km border in its southwest with Iran. It is home to world's 2nd-biggest Shia population after Iran. Also, Tehran was the first country to recognise Pakistan in 1947. Pakistan returned the favour for the Islamic Republic after the 1979 revolution

Pak also represents some Iranian diplomatic interests in Washington, where Tehran has no embassy

File photo of Trump with Sharif and Munir at the White House

BUILDING RAPPORT WITH US

Pakistan has been courting President Trump and his inner circle, securing deals on crypto and critical minerals. Pak even joined Trump's Board of Peace, and nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize last year. Army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, has built up a personal rapport with Trump. On Iran, Trump says Pakistan knows the country 'better than most'

TIGHTROPE DIPLOMACY WITH REGIONAL PLAYERS

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a strategic mutual defence agreement in 2025. Pakistan PM recently visited for talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Pakistan's foreign minister Ishaq Dar hosted a meeting with counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Egypt last month to discuss West Asia de-escalation, and then flew to Beijing. China, which is Iran's largest trading partner, then joined Pak in calling for an end to the war

Pakistan also shares close ties with Beijing, which, Trump told AFP, helped get Iran across the line to the negotiating table

Source: AFP, Agencies

WHAT'S IN IT FOR PAKISTAN?

Neutrality makes economic sense for Pakistan, which relies on oil and gas imports through the Strait of Hormuz. Continued disruption will worsen fuel supplies, drive up prices and force further austerity measures for the cash-strapped govt. A permanent end to war will boost regional stability but also help Islamabad at a time when it is locked in armed conflict

WHAT COMES NEXT?

White House says VP JD Vance will lead the US delegation to Islamabad, which would also include special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, with the first round of talkson Saturday

Pak PM urges all sides to respect ceasefire

Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday urged all sides to exercise restraint and respect the US-Iran ceasefire. "Violations of ceasefire have been reported at few places across the conflict zone which undermine the spirit of peace process," Shehbaz said in a post on X. "I earnestly and sincerely urge all parties to exercise restraint and respect the ceasefire for two weeks, as agreed upon, so that diplomacy can take a lead role towards peaceful settlement of the conflict," he added. He said that Pakistan is looking forward to permanently dousing the flames of war. Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi held a phone conversation with Pakistan army chief Asim Munir and discussed the violation of the ceasefire by Israel in Lebanon, state-run IRNA news agency reported. PTI

Tehran shuts Strait of Hormuz in response to attacks on Lebanon

100+ Killed As Israel Strikes Beirut

AFP

First responders and residents at the site of an Israeli airstrike in Beirut

Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz again Wednesday in response to Israeli attacks against the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon, casting doubt over whether an already precarious ceasefire to end more than a month of war will hold.

Israel also intensified its attacks in Lebanon, hitting several commercial and residential areas in Beirut without warning. At least 112 people were killed and hundreds were wounded in one of the deadliest days in the latest Israel-Hezbollah war. The fresh violence threatened to scuttle what US Vice President JD Vance called a "fragile" deal.

"Aggression towards Lebanon is aggression towards Iran," Gen Seyed Majid Mousavi, aerospace commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, wrote on X. He warned that Iranian forces were preparing a "heavy response" without revealing details. Israeli strikes hit several commercial and residential areas in central Beirut without warning on Wednesday.

US President Trump told PBS News Hour that Lebanon was not included in the deal because of the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group. When asked about Israel's latest strikes, he said, "That's a separate skirmish." Israel had said the agreement does not extend to its war with the Iran-backed Hezbollah, although mediator Pakistan said it does.

The sense of relief among Lebanese after the ceasefire announcement turned into panic with what Israel's military called its largest coordinated strike in the current war, hitting more than 100 Hezbollah targets within 10 minutes in Beirut, southern Lebanon and the eastern Bekaa Valley.

Black smoke towered over several parts of the seaside capital, where a huge number of people displaced by war have taken shelter. Explosions interrupted the honking of traffic on what had been a bustling, blue-sky afternoon. Ambulances raced toward open flames. Apartment buildings were struck. AP journalists saw charred bodies in vehicles and on the ground at one of Beirut's busiest intersections in the central Corniche al Mazraa neighbourhood, a mixed commercial and residential area. Using forklifts, rescue workers removed smouldering debris and sifted through ruins for survivors. There was no sign of Hezbollah launching strikes against Israel in the first couple of hours after the attacks. Central Beirut has been hit before, but not by so many strikes at once and in the middle of the day. AP

Shipowners seeking details to check safety of Hormuz

The Strait of Hormuz appeared to remain largely blocked on Wednesday, as shipowners try to understand if they can safely transit the vital waterway following a ceasefire between the US and Iran that was announced overnight. A total of seven ships were seen exiting the region since Tuesday morning, while three vessels entered, tracking data compiled by Bloomberg show. Total peace-time transits stood at about 135 a day last year. More than 800 freighters are stuck inside the gulf, mostly waiting to leave.

While shipowners and insurer groups lined up to welcome the ceasefire, they also warned that more details will be needed to determine if safe transit is possible. Iran has said a precondition of the ceasefire is that its armed forces should coordinate navigation through what is the world's most important oil channel.

A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S, the world's second-largest container line, said the pause "may create transit opportunities, but it does not yet provide full maritime certainty". Japan's NYK said it was monitoring the situation.

"Time will tell whether it is a pause or a peace but it is highly unlikely that trade into the Gulf will simply resume," said Neil Roberts, head of marine and aviation at Lloyd's Market Association. "The region remains at heightened risk." While shipowners and insurers expressed cautious optimism, they added that it still isn't clear how transits will work in practice. BLOOMBERG

'Trump admin likely to cut war funding request'

US is expected to significantly scale back its plan to seek additional funding for the war with Iran, the Washington Post reported on Wednesday, citing US officials and others familiar with the matter. The total funding is likely to fall between $80 billion and $100 billion, which will be less than half of the more than $200 billion that the Pentagon had initially proposed to the White House last month, the report said. Reuters could not immediately verify the report. REUTERS

Iran struck Saudi Arabia oil pipeline just hours after ceasefire, says report

Iran attacked Saudi Arabia's East-West Pipeline just hours after a ceasefire was agreed to pause the Iran war, an industry source told Reuters on Wednesday, hitting its only crude oil export route since hostilities began.

Saudi Arabia's East-West Pipeline, currently its only outlet for exporting crude oil, was hit in an Iranian attack while other facilities in the kingdom were also targeted, an industry source told Reuters on Wednesday. The pipeline was diverting around 7 million barrels per day (bpd) from the kingdom's oil heartland in the east to the Red Sea port of Yanbu after Iran effectively shut the Strait of Hormuz, trapping huge volumes of oil and gas in the Gulf and sending prices skyrocketing. Flows through the pipeline are expected to be affected, the source said, adding damage was being assessed. That could exacerbate what experts have called the world's worst energy crisis.

AFP

People in Baghdad's Tahrir Square celebrate US-Iran ceasefire on Wednesday

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said in a statement on Wednesday they had hit several targets across the region with missiles and drones, including what the IRGC called oil facilities of US companies in Yanbu.

The exact timing of the attack was not immediately clear nor the extent of any damage or the impact on the pipeline's operations. The Saudi govt communications office and pipeline operator Saudi Aramco did not immediately respond to emailed requests for comment.

Attacks on other Gulf countries were not halted despite the truce agreement.

The Kuwaiti army said that an intensified wave of Iranian attacks had targeted the country since 8am local time, adding drone attacks caused extensive damage to oil facilities, power plants and water desalination plants. The United Arab Emirates said it was dealing with Iranian missile and drone attacks and Bahrain reported that an Iranian attack damaged houses in the Sitra area.

Aramco uses about 2 million bpd of the East-West Pipeline's capacity domestically, leaving roughly 5 million bpd for export. Yanbu loadings averaged a near-capacity 4.6 million bpd in the week starting March 23, shipping data showed. The pipeline had left the kingdom as a relative winner from the strait's closure, with a Reuters analysis showing its March estimated oil proceeds were higher than a year earlier. REUTERS

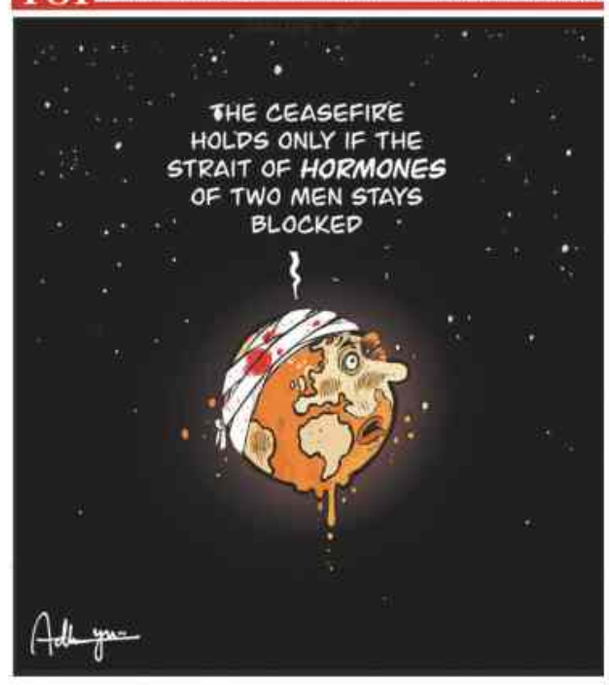
US to help with Hormuz traffic, big money will be made: Trump

▶Continued from P1

US will be helping with the traffic build-up in the Strait of Hormuz. There will be lots of positive action! Big money will be made," Trump said in a post, later telling ABC News that he's okay with the Iranians charging a toll for all ships that go through the Strait of Hormuz and there could even be a joint US-Iran venture to charge tolls. "We're thinking of doing it as a joint venture. It's a way of securing it from lots of other people," he told the network.

Defence secretary Pete Hegseth said US and Israeli forces had achieved a "capital V military victory" and that the Iranian military no longer posed a significant threat to US forces or the region. Iranian military said the country forced Israel and the US to accept its "proposed conditions and surrender".

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL — SANDEEP ADHWARYU



China surpasses US in Global approval ratings in 2025: Gallup survey

Beijing: China under the leadership of President **Xi Jinping** has overtaken the US in global approval ratings in 2025 as the disapproval of American leadership under President Trump rose to a record 48%, according to a worldwide survey by Washington-based analytics and advisory firm Gallup. While neither China nor the US command broad support, the survey found a median of 36% approval rating of China's leadership, compared with 31% for the US leadership.

China's five-percentage-point advantage over the US is the widest Gallup has recorded in China's favour in nearly 20 years, the survey results published on its website said. The shift reflects a decline in US ratings alongside an increase for China. Median approval of US leadership fell from 39% in 2024 to 31% in 2025, returning to earlier lows, while China's approval rose from 32% to 36%.

At the same time, disapproval of US leadership rose to a record-high 48 per cent while China's disapproval rating remained flat at 37%, according to the survey.

For the past two decades, Gallup has asked residents of every country polled as part of its annual World Poll to rate the leadership of the four leading economic or military powers - the United States, China, Russia and Germany. The latest results are based on Gallup surveys conducted in 2025 in more than 130 countries, it said.

The survey, however, predates several major developments in early 2026, including the US decision to withdraw from 66 international organisations in Jan and the outbreak of war with Iran in late Feb.

Germany, which was ranked as the most positively viewed major power for nine consecutive years in Gallup's trend, spanning the chancellorships of Merkel, Olaf Scholz and Friedrich Merz, received the highest approval in 2025, at 48%. While Russia's approval stood at 26%. PTI

B'desh parliament endorses ban on Sheikh Hasina's Awami League

Dhaka: Bangladesh's Parliament on Wednesday passed a law endorsing the previous Muhammad Yunus-led interim govt's order to disband deposed prime minister **Sheikh Hasina**'s Awami League party. "This bill (law) concerns the banning of a genocidal, terrorist organisation. This is an amendment to the previous Anti-Terrorism Act," home minister Salahuddin Ahmed told the Parliament, without naming the Awami League.

Ahmed said the new law would continue the suspension of the Awami League's registration with the election commission and ensure the party's trial for its alleged involvement in "genocide". Treasury bench members belonging to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) passed the bill in a voice vote, keeping intact the ordinance framed by the interim govt while amending a previous terrorism law. PTI

British Sikh body proposes first Sikh Soldier memorial statue in W London

Naomi Canton

London: Tory peer Rami Ranger's British Sikh Association has submitted a planning application to Ealing Council for a Sikh Soldier memorial statue, the first in west London, to be erected within a public park in Southall. The plans state the statue would cost up to £2 million (about Rs 24.6 crore).

The purpose of the memorial, earmarked for Manor House Grounds, is to commemorate Sikh soldiers and to recognise their historic contribution and sacrifice while serving alongside British forces, in particular at the Battle of Saragarhi.

Chairman of the British Sikh Association Lord Ranger told **TOI**: "The British Sikh Association is funding the statue. We will raise the money from the community. We have already raised a few thousand pounds. We chose Southall as it has a large Punjabi community which has a strong connection with the British Indian Army community who stayed here after the war. They mostly came to Southall as it was the first town near the airport and had lots of factories at that time."

Af and Pak seek comprehensive solution, will avoid escalation: China

Beijing: Chinese govt said on Wednesday said that Afghanistan and Pakistan have agreed not to escalate their conflict and to "explore a comprehensive solution" after weeks of cross-border fighting between the two countries.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said that after seven days of peace talks, mediated by Beijing, in the western Chinese city of Urumqi, all the parties also agreed to keep the dialogue. She said that they acknowledged that "terrorism is the core issue affecting the relationship." United Nations' office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs in Afghanistan said on Tuesday that the conflict had displaced 94,000 people overall, while 100,000 people in two Afghan districts near the border have been completely cut off.

There was no comment from Islamabad. But Afghanistan's foreign ministry spokesman, Abdul Qahar Balkhi, said on Wednesday that the talks between the Afghan and Pakistani delegations, hosted and mediated by China, have concluded. AP

WORLD DIGEST

Sat data shows Earth getting ever brighter at night

Daily satellite observations have revealed a continued nighttime brightening globally due to artificial lighting, with important regional variations including a surge in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia alongside a deliberate dimming in Europe driven by concerns over energy conservation and light pollution. Researchers documented a 16% net increase in global nighttime light from 2014 to 2022, but showed it was not a steady brightening but rather a patchwork of increasing and decreasing regional brightness shaped by numerous factors. The US in 2022 had by far the highest total luminosity of any country, followed by China, India, Canada and Brazil.

Greece to ban social media for under-15s from 2027

Greece will ban access to social media for children under the age of 15 from Jan 1, 2027, PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis said on Wednesday, citing rising anxiety, sleep problems and the addictive design of online platforms. In a video message addressed to young people, Mitsotakis said children spending long hours in front of screens do not allow their minds to rest and face growing pressure from constant comparison and online comments. The Greek govt has already outlawed mobile phones in schools and set up parental control platforms to limit teenagers' screen time.

Arrest warrants against Nepal ex-PM Deuba, wife

A Nepalese court has issued arrest warrants against former PM Sher Bahadur Deuba and his wife Arzu Deuba Rana, the former foreign minister, in money laundering cases, media reports said on Wednesday. The Kathmandu District Court issued warrants against the couple on Tuesday following a request by the department of money laundering, which is investigating the couple's assets, according to The Kathmandu Post newspaper. Citing investigative sources, the paper said that the couple is believed to be in Singapore. The department started investigating the assets of the couple after burnt pieces of banknotes were recovered from their residence at Budhanilkantha on the outskirts of Kathmandu in September.

BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO. LTD. | Estd. 1838 | VOL. 43 NO. 84 | BENGALURU | THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

THE TIMES

INCLUDES 4 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES

HALF-CENTURIES BY SKIPPER SHUBMAN GILL, SUNDAR, BUTTLER PROPEL GUJARAT TITANS TO 210 RUNS, HELP BEAT DELHI CAPITALS BY ONE RUN IN IPL MATCH 15

B'desh minister meets EAM, seeks Hasina extradition

New Delhi: Bangladesh foreign minister Khalilur Rahman met his Indian counterpart, S Jaishankar, on Wednesday during his two-day visit. He insisted that former PM Sheikh Hasina be extradited, marking the first time the new BNP govt led by PM Tarique Rahman officially raised the issue with India, **reports Sachin Parashar.** Jaishankar reiterated India's desire to engage constructively with the new govt and strengthen bilateral ties.

▶ B'desh Parl upholds ban on Awami League, PG OPP

▶Likely to follow, P 16

EC-TMC meeting turns into bitter war of words

EC: MP Shouted; CEC Told Us To Get Out: Party

Bharti Jain & Ambika Pandit

New Delhi: A meeting between TMC and Election Commission on Wednesday expectedly ended in acrimony, lasting barely 7-8 minutes and sparking a bitter war of words. EC sources accused party MP Derek O' Brien of "shouting at EC functionaries and not allowing chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar to speak", while TMC slammed the CEC for reportedly asking the party delegation to "get lost".

▶Bhowanipore electorate shrinks 25% after SIR, P 6
▶Mamata owns no land, house or car, P 6

The meeting took place against the backdrop of deletion of lakhs of voters in West Bengal and the rejection of the notice for removal of the CEC by Lok Sabha Speaker and Rajya Sabha chairman.

Sources said Kumar had to request O' Brien to maintain decorum of the commission room by saying that "shouting and indecent behaviour is not appropriate". After the RS MP was done raising the points on behalf of his party and just as the CEC started to respond with "straight-talk" that the West Bengal polls will be "fear-free, violence-free, intimidation-free, inducement-free and without any chhaapa, booth jamming or source jamming", O' Brien interrupted him, saying he had come to speak and not listen, according to the sources. The "ECI's Straight-talk to Trinamool Congress" was posted on the commission's X handle soon after the meeting.

▶TMC dares EC, P 16

POLL PANEL's POST ON X:
ECI's straight-talk to TMC...
This time, **elections in Bengal would surely be: fear-free, violence-free, intimidation-free,** inducement-free and without any chhapa, booth jamming and source jamming

TMC REPLIES: We are also speaking straight to EC in a straightforward manner. **This time elections must be: free from Delhi's control, free from political bias,** from targeted persecution of anyone, from double standards

Tamil Nadu chief secy, DGP shifted; Stalin cries foul

EC ordered the transfer of Tamil Nadu chief secretary N Muruganandam and appointed IAS officer M Sai Kumar in his place. It also posted IPS officer Sandeep Mittal as DGP (armed police, vigilance and anti-corruption) instead S Davidson Devasirvatham. CM M K Stalin termed the move as "unilateral and political outreach". P6

Ajmer dhobi gets ₹598cr tax notice

A washerman in Ajmer has received an I-T notice seeking an explanation for bank transactions worth over Rs 598cr linked to large-scale diamond trade. Jitendra Kumar said he lost his PAN card two years ago and it was not his bank account. P8

4-time MP Mohsina Kidwai, 94, dies

Congress veteran Mohsina Kidwai, a Gandhi family confidante, has passed away. She was 94. A four-time MP, Kidwai served as Union minister and held key roles within Congress. In 1978, she won Azamgarh seat despite a strong anti-Indira wave. P16

Bills to amend quota law for women cleared

Govt on Wednesday cleared the draft bills for amendments to the women's reservation law, paving the way for implementation of 33% reservation for them in Lok Sabha and state assemblies from 2029. P 5

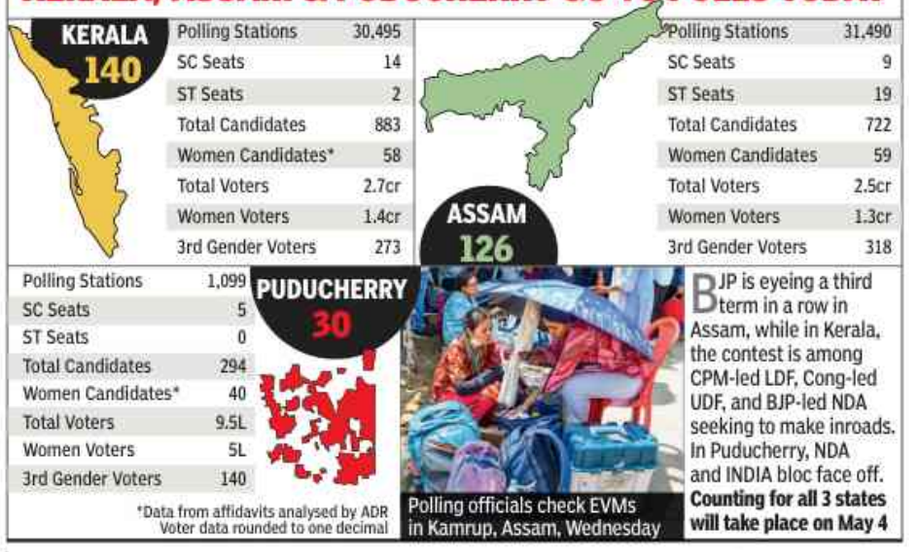
Thief hides 5 hours underwater, held

A wanted interstate thief hid underwater for five hours, breathing through a lotus stem before divers helped RPF nab him in MP. Suspected to be behind more than 500 train thefts, he has over 21 criminal cases against him across states. P8

Sand mafia mows down forest guard

A forest guard was crushed to death in MP's Chambal sanctuary area on Wednesday by a tractor-trolley ferrying illegally mined sand when he tried to stop it during a patrol. An IPS officer was similarly killed here in March 2012. P8

KERALA, ASSAM & PUDUCHERRY GO TO POLLS TODAY



Polling officials check EVMs in Kamrup, Assam, Wednesday

BJP is eyeing a third term in a row in Assam, while in Kerala, the contest is among CPM-led LDF, Cong-led UDF, and BJP-led NDA seeking to make inroads. In Puducherry, NDA and INDIA bloc face off. **Counting for all 3 states will take place on May 4**

With 29 taluks, B'luru region leads in overuse of state's groundwater

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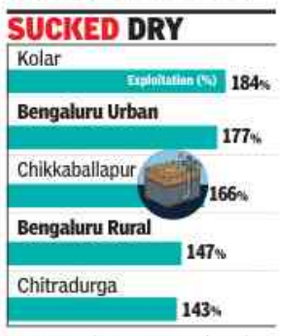

Bengaluru: Karnataka has recorded a decline in groundwater extraction—from 68.4% in 2024 to 66.4% in 2025—and has improved recharge capacity. However, areas in and around Bengaluru continue to extract groundwater in an unsustainable manner, says govt data released on Wednesday.

The 2025 Groundwater Assessment Report warns that rapid urbanisation and concentrated extraction in growth corridors continue to pose a challenge to long-term groundwater sustainability.

The stress is most visible in the Bengaluru region, which accounts for 29 of the 45 over-exploited taluks. These include areas in Bengaluru Urban (6), Bengaluru Rural (4), Chikkaballapur (6), Kolar (6), Bengaluru South (2), and Tumakuru (5).

While flagging a sharp regional imbalance in groundwater consumption, the report raises contamination concerns across districts.

In terms of extraction levels exceeding sustainable limits in the districts, Kolar topped the list with 184%, followed by Bengaluru Urban at 177%, Chikkaballapur at 166%, Bengaluru Rural at 147%, and Chitradurga at 143%. Bagalkot and Belagavi were also over-exploited.

Of the 237 assessment units, 45 taluks were categorised as over-exploited, where extraction exceeds 100% of available resources.

▶11 taluks critical, P 2

Appointment of priests by govt boards can't be a secular act: Centre

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New Delhi: The Centre on Wednesday launched a veiled attack on a Tamil Nadu law that wrested control of appointment of 'archakas (priests)' to temples, saying Supreme Court in the past had wrongly classified appointment of 'archakas' as a "secular act" when it was purely a religious decision.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta made a strong pitch for review of the jurisprudence developed by SC over the past few decades without considering the complexity of issues related to religion, faith and belief, and on being unduly influenced by Western jurisprudence, where individual liberty trumped societal conscience and morality.

His pitch, while in sync with the Modi govt's stand on the scope of the judiciary's intervention in faith-related issues, also takes on an additional dimension.

▶True meaning, P 5

K'taka looks to sterilise wildlife to check conflicts

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MEANS TO COEXIST
- Forest **minister Eshwar Khandre proposes** wildlife sterilisation
- Proposal **targets conflict-prone animals** such as elephants, leopards
- Minister cites need to **balance human safety and conservation**
- Experts divided: **some call it impractical, others suggest limited,** scientific application

Bengaluru: Amid rising human-wildlife conflicts in the state, Karnataka forest minister Eshwar Khandre has sparked a national debate by proposing public discussions on using sterilisation or contraceptives to manage select wild animal populations in state forests.

The idea, still preliminary, has drawn mixed reactions from forestry experts and conservation scientists.

Referring to recurring conflicts and growing pressure on the govt to control such incidents, Khandre clarified that the trigger for the proposal was a sharp rise in the populations of animals such as elephants and leopards in conflict-prone regions. He stressed the need to balance conservation with human safety and livelihoods.

The minister pointed out that nearly 120-140 elephants in the Western Ghats have been living outside forested areas for decades, breeding at coffee estates.

▶Idea impractical, P 4

Kerala girl goes missing in Chikkamagaluru hills

Cops Intensify Search With Thermal Drones

Ranjith Kandya | TNN

Chikkamagaluru: District police launched a search for a 16-year-old girl from Kerala who went missing in Chikkamagaluru's Chandradrona Hills Tuesday.

The Class 10 student, **Srinandhana,** became untraceable during a trip to the hills with her family.

Chikkamagaluru SP Jitendra Kumar Dayama said teams deployed thermal drones, and were scanning CCTV footage. They are examining call records of the girl and her parents.

The forest, and fire and emergency personnel have joined the search. The operation, halted due to darkness, resumed Wednesday with additional SP Jayakumar joining the efforts.

"We have intensified the search with multiple teams on the ground. Challenging terrain and dense mist are hampering operations," a senior officer said.

The incident comes days after a similar incident in Kodagu, where Kerala-based techie GS Sharanya went missing during a trek to Tadiandamol. She was found about 72 hours later.

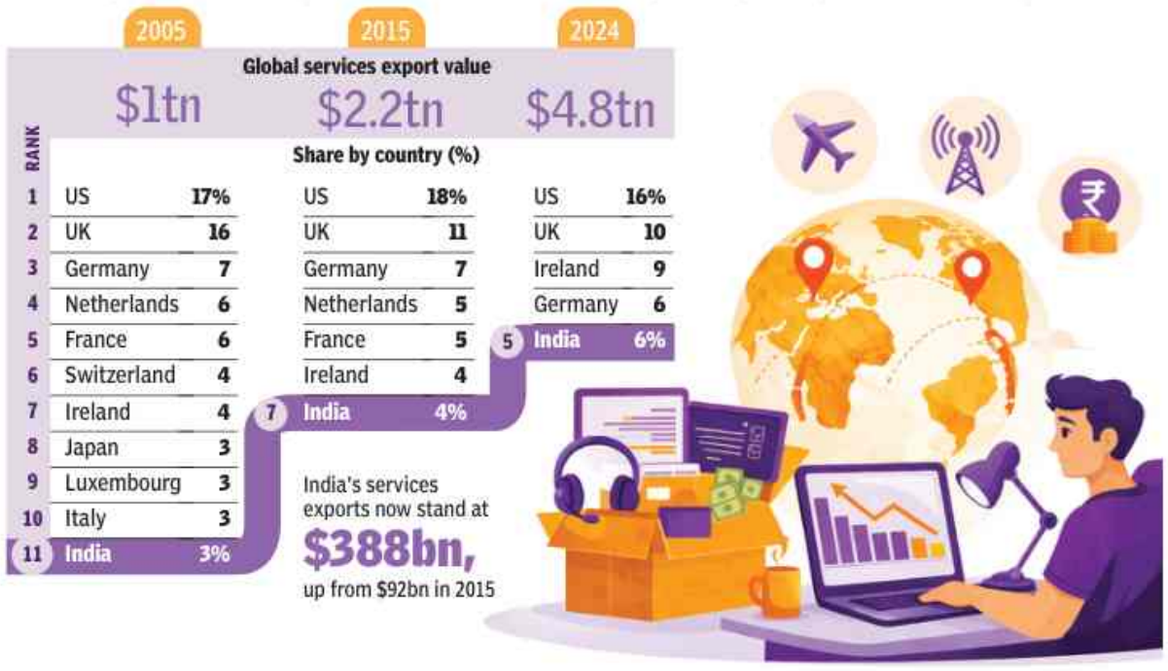
Forest minister Eshwar Khandre, meanwhile, assured full departmental support to trace the girl.

India now 5th largest exporter of services

Not gems, minerals, or farm produce, the champion of Indian exports is fast turning out to be services. Their rise is visible in global rankings, a widening trade surplus, and the narrowing gap with merchandise exports, finds **Richa Gandhi**

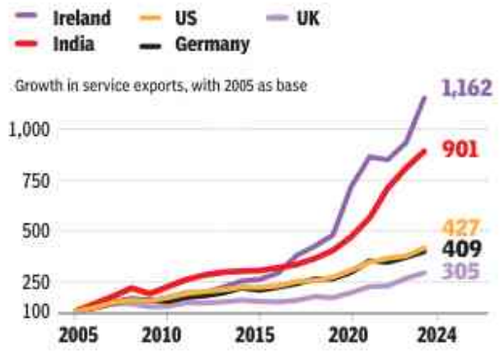
INDIA'S SERVICE EXPORTS HAVE JUMPED OVER 300% IN 10 YRS

India's rise in global services trade has been steady: from 11th in 2005 to 7th in 2015, and 5th in 2024. With export volumes now rivalling Germany's, the story is not just about scale, but of a clear repositioning in the global services economy


2005
2015
2024
Global services export value
$1tn
$2.2tn
$4.8tn
Share by country (%)
RANK
1 US 17% | US 18% | US 16%
2 UK 16 | UK 11 | UK 10
3 Germany 7 | Germany 7 | Ireland 9
4 Netherlands 6 | Netherlands 5 | Germany 6
5 France 6 | France 5 | India 6%
6 Switzerland 4 | Ireland 4
7 Ireland 4 | India 4%
8 Japan 3
9 Luxembourg 3
10 Italy 3
11 India 3%
India's services exports now stand at
$388bn,
up from $92bn in 2015

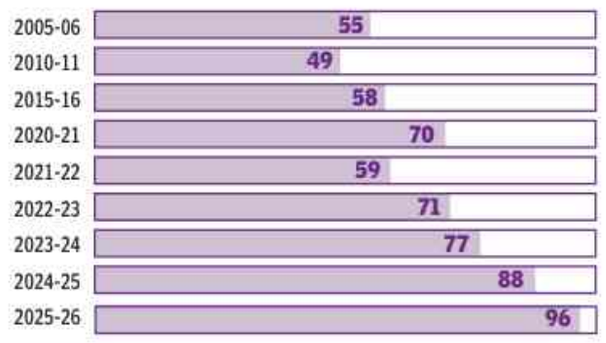
SURGE CAME DURING PANDEMIC, AND MOMENTUM CONTINUES

India's service exports have expanded at a steady pace through much of the past two decades. In the past five years, however, growth has accelerated markedly — surpassing most major service-exporting economies, with only Ireland standing out as an exception



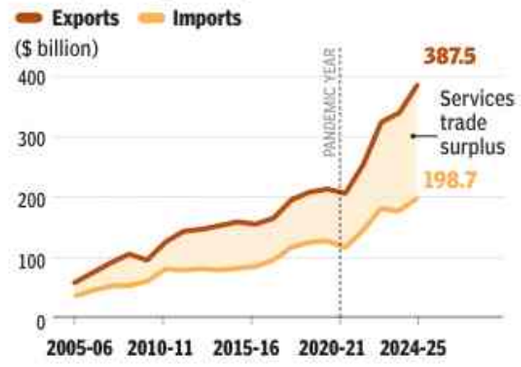
SERVICES HAVE CLOSED THE GAP WITH MERCHANDISE EXPORTS

Once about half the size of merchandise, service exports have grown to nearly match the trade in goods. The narrowing gap underscores the Indian economy's increasing reliance on services as a key driver of growth



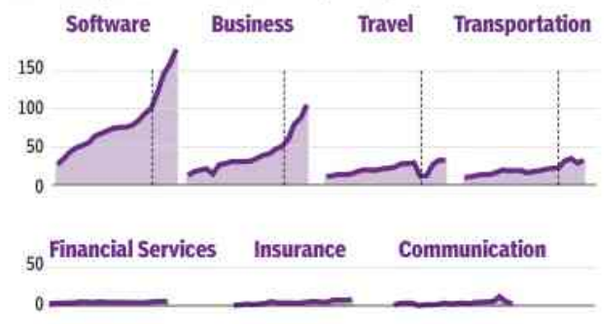
INDIA EXPORTS MORE SERVICES THAN IT IMPORTS

India has long maintained a surplus in services trade, which has helped cushion its merchandise trade deficits. Since the pandemic, this surplus has expanded significantly



SOFTWARE STILL LEADS, BUT BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES GAIN GROUND

Software remains the backbone of India's services exports, but the composition is steadily evolving. Post pandemic, business and financial services have gained a larger share, pointing to increasing diversification within the services basket



Graphic: **Chandni Tekwani**

Source: RBI, WTO

Cut airport fees for domestic flights by 25% for 3 mths: Govt

Bid To Ensure Air Fares Don't Defy Gravity

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In a bid to provide reprieve to airlines affected by the US-Iran war, the aviation ministry has directed all 34 major airports to reduce landing and parking charges for domestic flights by 25% for three months.

Accordingly, Airports Economic Regulatory Authority on Tuesday issued an order directing the operators of airports in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and others to do so with immediate effect.

With assembly elections in crucial states like Kerala and West Bengal on the horizon, the aviation ministry is making all possible attempts to ensure that domestic airfare hikes don't defy gravity. The hike in domestic ATF was capped at 25% this month. The ministry made a rare intervention in airport tariffs, given that a majority of them are run on a PPP model.

The order reads: "Landing and parking charges (part of aeronautical tariff) at all major airports shall be reduced by 25% from the prevailing tariff. This reduction comes into immediate effect and will be applicable on all domestic flights for a period of three months. The decision shall be reviewed prior to completion of the three-month period. Any under-recovery from aggregate revenue requirement will be trued up during the tariff determination of the next control period."

Under-recovery will be trued up during tariff determination of the next control period, Airports Economic Regulatory Authority said

This month, oil marketing PSUs hiked aviation turbine fuel base price for domestic and international flights by 25% and over 100%, respectively. The Air India group and IndiGo have hiked their fuel surcharge. Coupled with airspace restrictions to the West that force airlines to take much longer routes to Europe and America, apart from far fewer flights on lucrative Gulf routes and a weak rupee, airlines have been badly hit.

Govt eases cap on bulk supply of LPG cylinders to industries like pharma, steel

Easing pressure on the industrial sector, govt has decided to provide 70% of its pre-March bulk non-domestic LPG requirement, subject to an overall sectoral cap of 200 tonne per day, besides increasing natural gas allocation to fertiliser units from 90% to 95%, reports **Atul Mathur**.

The petroleum ministry said the eligible industries benefiting from the move include pharma, food, agriculture, polymers, packaging, paints, uranium, heavy water, steel, metals, glass, ceramics, foundries, forging units and aerosol manufacturing. "Priority shall be accorded to units requiring LPG for specialised purposes which cannot be substituted by natural gas," petroleum secretary Neeraj Mittal said in a communication to all states and Union Territories.

These units will have to register with oil marketing companies and apply for a PNG connection, unless their specialised requirements cannot be met by natural gas.

Govt had initially restricted the supply of commercial LPG to just 20% due to supply constraints amid the conflict in West Asia.

Cabinet clears 12% hike in non-urea fertiliser subsidy for kharif season

In an increase of around 12% over last year, Cabinet on Wednesday approved a subsidy of Rs 41,534 crore for non-urea fertilisers for the upcoming kharif season (from April to Sept), reports **Dipak Dash**. The decision comes amid fertiliser prices going up due to the West Asia crisis. Announcing the decision, I&B minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said govt was ensuring farmers continue to get fertilisers like Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP) at current rates despite fluctuations in global prices.

The subsidy for phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilisers in the last kharif season stood at Rs 37,216 crore.

The increase in per kg subsidy rates for non-urea fertilisers under the Nutrient-based Subsidy regime is in the range of 10%-21% compared to last year. The per kg subsidy for nitrogen will be Rs 47.3, an increase of 10%. In the case of phosphorus and sulphur, the subsidy is Rs 52.8 and Rs 3.2 per kg, respectively, which is 21% more than last year.

The higher subsidy means farmers will continue to get 50-kg DAP bags at the current rate of Rs 1,350.